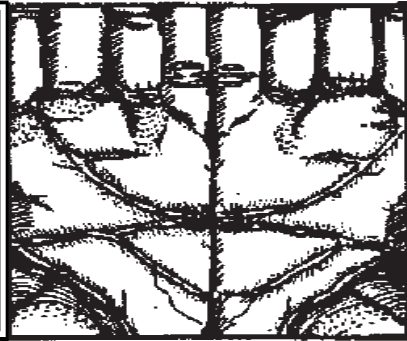


CHRONICLES

1



The book of Chronicles, now divided into two parts, was most probably written together with those of Ezra and Nehemiah in the fourth century before Christ, after the Jews came back from Exile: compare the last verses of Chronicles and the firsts of Ezra.

It was like a second attempt of telling the Sacred History from the beginning to the times of Judaism. The first attempt, much broader, had been carried out during the time of the Kings and Prophets and we find it in the previous books, from Genesis to Kings. Now, in taking again past events and memories, the author of Chronicles wanted to show that the future of the Jewish people depended on their faithfulness to the Law of Moses and to the prescriptions for worship.

In his time, the Jews were no longer an independent nation, but more or less an autonomous province of the Persian empire. There was a growing desire among them to become a “theocracy,” that is to say, a kingdom of God, ruled in God’s name by the priests. They were trying to forget the Persian administrators who left them quite free and they were organizing national life around the Temple and the law of Moses. They looked forward to the coming of “David’s son” and used to say: “If the Law were followed exactly throughout the country for one whole day, the Messiah would come.”

This is why the author is almost exclusively interested in the history of the kings of Judah, David’s descendants. While the author gives us a list of David’s ancestors all the way back to Adam, he does not say a word about the kingdom of Israel where most of the chosen people lived, because Israel had separated from the kingdom of David. The author gives us many colorful details not found in the books of Samuel and Kings, but generally speaking, his story seems unreal and uninteresting to us. Moreover, carried away by his enthusiastic faith, he delights in huge numbers and, at times, distorts reality to strengthen his point (compare 1 K 22:30 and 2 Chr 20:35; 2 S 12:31 and 1 Chr 20:3).

The author addresses Jewish people and strives to convince them that there is no blessing or future for them unless they remain strongly united around their faith, rooted in their land, obeying the Law and the priests and putting above all concerns the true worshipping in the temple of Jerusalem. The people of God must remain one and with a visible hierarchy.

How can we benefit from reading this book? On each page we will find the conviction that the believing people must have no other ambition but to fulfill the will of God; other victories will come as a gift. Moreover, it is a reminder that Christ’s people, even though they do not have visible borders now and do not live in isolation among other people, must not lose their uniqueness in an attempt to blend with the masses. Believers will never totally resemble those who do not believe, nor will they think in exactly the same way. They have their own mission and are concerned about the visible unity of the church, around those whom God placed among them as his representatives.

Peoples and cities and their relationship with the Israelites

1 ¹Adam, Seth, Enosh, ²Kenan, Mahalel, Jared, ³Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, ⁴Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth.

⁵Sons of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, the Medes, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, Tiras. ⁶Sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, Diphath, Togarmah. ⁷Sons of Javan: Elisha, Tarshish, the Kittim, the Daanites.

⁸Sons of Ham: Cush, Misraim, Put, Canaan.

⁹Sons of Cush: Seba, Havilah, Sabta, Raama, Sabteca, Sons of Raamah: Sheba, Dedan. ¹⁰Cush became father of Nimrod, the first potentate on earth.

¹¹Misraim became of the people of Lud, of Anam, of Lehab, of Naptu, ¹²of Pathros, Casluh and Caphtor, from which the Philistines came. ¹³Canaan became father of Sidon, his firstborn, then Heth, ¹⁴and the Jebusites, the Amorites, Girgashites, ¹⁵Hivites, Sinites, ¹⁶Arvadites, Zemarites, Hamathites.

¹⁷Sons of Shem, Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, Aram. Sons of Aram: Uz, Hul, Gether and Meshech. ¹⁸Arpachshad became father of Shelah, and Shelah became father of Eber. ¹⁹To Eber were born two sons; the first was called Peleg, because it was in his time the earth was divided, and his brother was called Joktan.

²⁰Joktan became father of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ²¹Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²²Ebal, Abimael, Sheba, ²³Ophir, Havilah, Jobab; all these are sons of Joktan.

²⁴Shem, Arpachshad, Shelah, ²⁵Eber, Peleg, Reu, ²⁶Serug, Nahor, Terah, ²⁷Abram, that is Abraham.

Descendants of Abraham

²⁸Sons of Abraham: Isaac and Ishmael. ²⁹Sons of Ishmael: Nebaioth (his first born) then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, ³⁰Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad, Tema, ³¹Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah.

³²Sons of Keturah, Abraham's concubine: Zimran, Jokshan, ³³Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. Sons of Jokshan: Sheba and Dedan. Sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, Eldaah.

³⁴Abraham was the father of Isaac who had two sons: Esau and Israel. ³⁵The descendants of Esau were Eliphaz, Reuel, Jeush, Jalam and Korah. ³⁶The descendants of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zephi, Gatam, Kenaz, Timna and Amalek. ³⁷The descendants of Reuel were Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. ³⁸The sons of Seir were: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. ³⁹The clans descended from Lotan were Hori and Homam. Lotan's sister

was named Timna. ⁴⁰The clans descended from Shobal were Alian, Manahath, Ebal, Shephi, and Onam. The descendants of Zibeon were Aiah and Anah. ⁴¹Anah had a son named Dishon, who was the ancestor of the clans of Hamran, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran. ⁴²Ezer was the ancestor of the clans of Bilhan, Zaavan, and Jaakan.

⁴³Here are the kings who ruled in the land of Edom before an Israelite king ruled: Bela son of Bero; his city was called Dinhabah. ⁴⁴When Bela died, Jobab son of Zerah from Bozrah became king. ⁴⁵When Jobab died, Husham of the land of the Temanites became king. ⁴⁶When Husham died, Hadad son of Bedad became king; he defeated the Midianites in the country of Moab, and his city was called Avith. ⁴⁷When Hadad died, Samlah of Masrekah became king. ⁴⁸Samlah died and Saul of Rehoboth-han-nahar became king. ⁴⁹When Saul died, Baal-hanan son of Achbor became king. ⁵⁰When Baal-hanan died, Hadad became king. His city was called Pai; his wife's name was Mehetabel daughter of Matred, from Mezahab.

⁵¹After Hadad died, these were the chiefs of Edom: Chief of Timna, Chief of Aliah, Chief Jetheth, ⁵²Chief Oholibamah, Chief of Elah, Chief Pinon, ⁵³Chief Kenaz, Chief Teman, Chief Mibzar, ⁵⁴Chief Magdiel, and Chief Iram.

The sons of Jacob and the descendants of Judah

2 ¹These are the sons of Israel: Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah; Issachar and Zebulun; ²Dan, Joseph and Benjamin, Nephtali; Gad and Asher.

³Judah had five sons in all. The first three were born to him by Bath-shua the Canaanite woman. They were Er, Onan and Shelah. Er, Judah's firstborn, was so evil that Yahweh put him to death. ⁴By his daughter-in-law Tamar, Judah had two more sons, Perez and Zerah. ⁵Perez had two sons, Hezron and Hamul. ⁶His brother Zerah had five sons: Zimri, Hetan, Heman, Calcol and Dara. ⁷One of them, Achar, son of Carmi – brought trouble upon the people of Israel by keeping loot that had been devoted to God. ⁸Ethan had one son, Azariah.

⁹Hezron became the father of Jerahmeel, Ram, and Caleb. ¹⁰Ram was the father of Amminadab; Amminadab of Nahshan. ¹¹Nahshan, who was a prince of the tribe of Judah, was the father of Salmon; Salmon of Boaz; ¹²Boaz of Obed; Obed of Jesse. ¹³Jesse had seven sons: Eliab, the firstborn, Abinadab, Shammah, ¹⁴Nethanel, Raddai, ¹⁵Ozem and David, the youngest. Jesse had two daughters: Zerwiah and Abigail. ¹⁶Zerwiah had three sons: Abishai, Joab and Asahel. ¹⁷Abigail married Jether the Ishmaelite. They had a son named Amasa.

¹⁸Caleb, son of Hezron, married Azubah and had a daughter named Jerioth. Jerioth had three sons: Jesher, Shobab and Ardon. ¹⁹Azubah died, and Caleb married Ephrath, and they had a son named Hur. ²⁰Hur became father of Uri and grandfather of Bezalel.

²¹When Hezron was sixty years old he married Machir's daughter, the sister of Gilead. They had a son named Segub, who had a son named Jair. ²²Jair ruled twenty-three towns in the land of Gilead. ²³But the kingdoms of Geshur and Aram took from them the villages of Jair, that is Kenath and its towns, sixty towns in all. All this had belonged to the descendants of Machir, father of Gilead.

²⁴After Hezron's death, his son Caleb married Ephrathah, his father's widow. They had a son named Ashur, the father of Tekoa.

²⁵Jerahmeel, Hezron's eldest son, had five sons: Ram, his firstborn, Bunah, Oren, Ozem and Ahijah. ²⁶Jerahmeel had another wife called Atarah; she was the mother of Onam.

²⁷Ram had three sons: Maaz, Jamin and Eker.

²⁸Onam was the father of Shammai and Jada; Shammai, of Nadab and Abishur. ²⁹Abishur's wife was called Abihail; she bore him Ahban and Molid. ³⁰Nadab had two sons, Seled and Appaim, but Seled died leaving no son. ³¹Appaim was the father of Ishi, who was the father of Sheshan; Sheshan was the father of Ahlai. ³²Jada, Shammai's brother, had two sons: Jether and Jonathan. Jether died leaving no sons. ³³Jonathan had two sons: Peleth and Zaza.

These were all descendants of Jerahmeel.

³⁴Sheshan had no sons, only daughters. ³⁵He had an Egyptian slave named Jarha to whom he gave his daughter in marriage. ³⁶They had a son named Attai. The ancestral line from Attai to Elishama is as follows: Attai, Nathan, ³⁷Zabad, Ephlail, Obed, ³⁸Jehu, Azariah, ³⁹Helez, Eleasah, ⁴⁰Sismai, Shallum, ⁴¹Jekamiah, and Elishama.

⁴²The firstborn son of Caleb, Jerahmeel's brother, was named Mesha. Mesha was the father of Ziph, who was the father of Meresha. ⁴³Meresha was father of Hebron who had four sons: Korah, Tappuah, Rekem and Shema. ⁴⁴Shema became father of Raham and grandfather of Jorkeam. Rekem became father of Shammai ⁴⁵and grandfather of Maon. Maon became father of Bethzur.

⁴⁶Caleb had a concubine named Ephah who gave birth to Haran, Moza and Gazez. Haran also had a son named Gazez. ⁴⁷Jahdai had six sons: Regem, Jotham, Geshan, Pelet, Ephah and Shaaph. ⁴⁸Caleb had another concubine, Maacah, who gave birth to Sheber and Tirhanah. ⁴⁹Later she had two more sons: Shaaph, who founded the town of

Madmannah, and Sheva, who founded the towns of Machbenah and Gibeah. The daughter of Caleb was Achsah.

⁵⁰The following were also descendants of Caleb. Hur was the firstborn son of Ephrath. Hur's son Shobal was father of Kiriath-jearim; ⁵¹Salma, father of Bethlehem, and Haroeh, father of Beth-gader. ⁵²Shobal, the father of Kiriath-jearim was the father of the people of Haroah, that is half of the Manahathites, ⁵³and also the clans living in Kiriath-jearim: the Ithrites, Puthites, Shumathites and Mishraitites. The people of the cities of Zorah and Eshtaol belonged to these clans.

⁵⁴Sons of Salma: Bethlehem, Netophath, Atroth Beth-Joab, and the Zorites, who were one of the clans in Manaheth. ⁵⁵The Soferites lived in the town of Jabez: the Tirathites, Shimeathites, and Sucathites. They were Cainites, descendants of Jamat, the Rechabites' ancestor.

The descendants of David

3 ¹These are the sons of David who were born to him while he was in Hebron: the firstborn Amnon, whose mother was Ahinoam from Jezreel; second, Daniel, whose mother was Abigail from Carmel; ²third, Absalom, whose mother was Maacah, daughter of King Talmai of Geshur; fourth, Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith; ³fifth, Shephatiah, whose mother was Abital; sixth, Ithream, whose mother was Eglah. ⁴All six were born to him in Hebron, where he ruled for seven years and six months.

He ruled as king for thirty-three years in Jerusalem. ⁵Many sons were born to him in Jerusalem. By his wife Bathsheba, daughter of Ammiel, he had four sons: Shimea, Shobab, Nathan and Solomon. Nine other sons were: ⁶Ibhar, Elishama, Eliphelet, ⁷Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, ⁸Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

⁹All these were sons of David, besides other sons by the concubines. Tamar was their sister.

¹⁰These are the descendants of King Solomon from father to son: Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa, Jehoshaphat, ¹¹Joram, Ahaziah, Joash, ¹²Amaziah, Azariah, Jotham, ¹³Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, ¹⁴Amon, and Josiah. ¹⁵Josiah had four sons: Johanan, the firstborn, Jehoiakim second, Zedekiah third, and Shallum fourth. ¹⁶The sons of Jehoiakim were: Jeconiah and Zedekiah.

¹⁷These are the descendants of King Jeconiah, who was taken captive by the Babylonians. Jeconiah had seven sons: Shealtiel, ¹⁸Malchiram, Pedaiah, Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah. ¹⁹Pedaiah had two sons: Zerubbabel and Shimei. Zerubbabel had two sons, Meshullam and Hananiah, and one daughter,

Shelomith. ²⁰Meshullam had five sons: Hashubah, Ohel, Berechiah, Hasadiah, and Jushab-hesed. ²¹Hananiah's two sons were Pelatish and Jeshiah. Jeshiah was the father of Rephaiah, who was the father of Aman, who was the father of Obadiah and grandfather of Shecaniah. ²²Shecaniah's son was Shemaiah and his five grandsons were: Hattush, Igal, Bariah, Nedariah, and Shaphat. ²³Neariah's three sons were: Elioenai, Hizkiah and Azrikam. ²⁴Elioenai's seven sons were: Hodaviah, Eliashib, Pelaiah, Akkub, Johanan, Delaiah, and Anani.

Heads of families of the twelve tribes

4 ¹Some of the descendants of Judah are: Perez, Hezron, Carmi, Hur, and Shobal. ²Shobal was the father of Reaiah, who was the father of Jahath, the father of Ahumai and Lahad: these people lived in Zorah.

³These were the descendants of Etam: Jezreel, Ishma, and Idbash, whose sister was called Hazzelelponi. ⁴Penuel became father of Gedor, and Ezer the father of Hushah. These are the descendants of Hur, the first-born of Ephrathah, father of Bethlehem.

⁵Ashhur, father of Tekoa, had two wives: Helah and Naarah. ⁶Naarah bore him four sons: Ahuzaam, Hephher, the Temeni and the Haahashtari. ⁷Ashur had three sons by Helah: Zereth, Zohar, Ethnan. ⁸Koz became father of Anub and Zobebah, and the clans of Aharhel son of Harum. ⁹Jabez was the known of them. His mother had given him the name Jabez, to recall that "In pain she had given birth to him." ¹⁰Jabez called on the God of Israel, "If you truly bless me, you will give me much land. Be with me, and keep me from anything that might harm or cause me pain." God gave him what he had prayed for.

¹¹Chelub, the brother of Shuhah, became the father of Mehir, who was the father of Eshton. ¹²Eshton, had three sons, Bethrapha, Paseah and Tehinnah. Tehinnah was the father of Imahas. The descendants of these men lived in Recah.

¹³Kenaz had two sons, Othniel and Seraiah. Othniel also had two sons: Hathath and Meonothai, ¹⁴who became the father of Ophrah. Seraiah became the father of Joab, the founder of Craftsmen's Valley, where skilled workers lived.

¹⁵Caleb, son of Jephunneh had three sons: Iru, Elah and Naam. Son of Elah: Kenaz.

¹⁶The sons of Jehallelel were: Ziph, Ziphah, Tiria, and Asarel.

¹⁷Ezrah had four sons: Jether, Mered, Epher, and Jalon. Mered's wife Bithiah, a daughter of the King of Egypt, gave birth to a daughter, Miriam, and two sons, Shammai and Ishbah. Ishbah was the father of Eshtemoa. ¹⁸Mered also had a wife from the

tribe of Judah who gave birth to three sons: Jered, the father of Gedor; Heber, father of Soco; and Jekuthiel, father of Zanoah.

¹⁹Hodiah married the sister of Naham. Their descendants formed the clan of Garm, which lived in the town of Keilah, and the clan of Maacath, which lived in the town of Eshtemoa.

²⁰The sons of Shimon were: Amnon, Rinnah, Ben-hanan, and Tilon.

The sons of Ishi were: Zoheth and Ben-zoheth.

²¹The descendants of Shelah son of Judah were: Er, father of Lecah; Laadah, father of Mareshah; and the clans of linen weavers of Beth-ashbea; ²²Jokim and the people who lived in Cozeba; Joash and Saraph who went to Moab to take wives before returning to Bethlehem (these are events of long ago.) ²³They were potters and lived in the towns of Netaim and Gederah; they stayed with the king there, employed in his workshop.

²⁴Simeon had five sons; Nemuel, Jamin, Jarib, Zerah, and Shaul. ²⁵Shaul's son was Shallum, his grandson was Mibsam, and his great-grandson was Mishma. ²⁶The sons of Mishma were: Hammuel, Zakur, Simi. ²⁷Simi had sixteen sons and daughters, but his brothers did not have many children, and none of their families increased as the families of Judah did.

²⁸They lived in Beersheba, Moladah and Hazarshual, ²⁹Bilhah, Ezem and Tolad, ³⁰Bethuel, Hormah and Ziklag. ³¹Bethmarcaboth, Hazarsusim, Bethbiri, Shaaraim. These were their towns until the reign of David. ³²Their outlying villages were: Etam, Ain, Rimmon, Tochen and Ashan, five towns, ³³with all their surrounding villages as far as Baalath. Here they had their settlements and sorted themselves into their various groups.

³⁴Meshobab, Jamlech, Joshah son of Amaziah, ³⁵Joel, Jehu son of Joshibiah, son of Seraiah, son of Asiel, ³⁶Elioenei, Jaakobah, Jeshohaiah, Asaiah, Adiel, Jesimiel, Benaiah, ³⁷Ziza, Ben-shiphi, Benallon, Ben-jedaiah, Ben-shimri, Ben-shemaiah. ³⁸These men came with their clans and families; they grew in number and spread. ³⁹As they searched for pasture for their flocks they traveled from the Gerar pass to the eastern end of the valley, ⁴⁰where they found good, fat pasture; the land was broad, untroubled, peaceful.

Hamites had been living there before them. ⁴¹But in the time of Hezekiah king of Judah this group of Simeon's tribe arrived there, overran their tents and the dwellings they found there. They wiped them out through an anathema still in force today and settled in their place, since there was pasturage for their flocks.

⁴²Some of them, belonging to the sons of

Simeon, reached Mount Seir: five hundred men led by Pelathiah, Neariah, Rephaiah, and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi. ⁴³They defeated the surviving fugitives of Amalek and still live there today.

5 ¹Descendants of Reuben, firstborn of Israel. He was indeed the firstborn but, when he had relations with his father's concubine, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph son of Israel. The group of Joseph, however did not keep this firstborn right ²because Judah proved more powerful than his brothers (and from him proceeds the Ruler), but the firstborn right belongs to the tribes of Joseph.

³Sons of Reuben, firstborn of Israel; Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, Carmi.

⁴Sons of Joel: Shemaiah his son, Gog his son, Shimei his son, ⁵Micah his son, Reaiah his son, Baal his son, ⁶Beerah his son, whom Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria carried off into exile. He was a prince of the Reubenites.

⁷His kinsmen, by clans, grouped according to their kinship: Jeiel, the chief, Zechariah, ⁸Bela son of Azaz, son of Shema, son of Joel.

These lived in Aroer as far as Nebo and Baal-Mehon. ⁹These extended to the east toward the River Euphrates, reaching the desert, because their flocks had multiplied in the land of Galaad.

¹⁰In the days of Saul they waged war against the Agarites who were defeated, and they occupied their homes east of Galaad.

¹¹The sons of Gad lived opposite them, in the land of Bashan, as far as Salecah. ¹²First, Joel, and then Shapham, Janai and Shaphat in Bashan.

¹³The other families of the tribe were those of Michael, Meshullam, Sheba, Jorai, Jacan, Zia, and Eber.

¹⁴These are the descendants of Abihail, whose ancestors were traced back as follows: Abihail, Huri, Jaroah, Gilead, Michael, Jeshishai, Jahdo, Buz. ¹⁵Ahi son of Abdiel, and grandson of Guni, was head of these clans.

¹⁶They had settled in the territory of Gilead and Bashan, in the towns there and all over the pasture lands of Sharon. ¹⁷(All were listed in the family records in the days of king Jotham of Judah and King Jeroboam of Israel).

¹⁸The people of Reuben, Gad, and half tribe of Manasseh, were 44,760 valiant men, well-trained in the use of shields, swords, and bows. ¹⁹They waged war against the Hagrite tribes of Jetur, Naphish, and Nodab, and as they put their trust in God and called on him for help, ²⁰they were victorious over the Hagrites and all their allies. ²¹They took with them from the Hagrites' livestock, 50,000 camels, 250,000 sheep, and 2,000 donkeys.

²²They took 100,000 prisoners of war, but many of the enemy had been killed for it was God's war. And they settled in what had been Hagrite territory until the exile.

²³The half tribe of Manasseh settled in the land between Bashan and Baal-hermon, Senir and Mount Hermon, and they were very numerous. ²⁴These are the heads of their clans: Ephraim, Ishi, Eliel, Azriel, Jeremiah, Hodaviah, and Jahdiel. These were famous warriors and leaders of their clans.

²⁵But they were unfaithful to the God of their ancestors and worshiped the gods of the peoples whom God had driven out of the land. ²⁶So the God of Israel brought against them the anger of Pul, king of Assyria, and of Tilgath-pileser, king of Assyria, who deported the tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh. They were taken off to Halah near Habor and the river Gozan. They are still there today.

The ancestral line of the high priests

²⁷Sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath and Merari. ²⁸Sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. ²⁹Sons of Amram: Aaron, Moses and Mary. Sons of Aaron: Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

³⁰The descendants of Eleazar from one generation to the next are as follows: Phinehas, Abishua, Bukki, Uzzi, ³¹Zerahiah, Meraioth, ³²Amariah, Ahitub, ³³Zadok, Ahimaaz, ³⁴Azariah, Johanan, ³⁵Azariah (the one who served as priest in the Temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem), ³⁶Amariah, Ahitub, ³⁷Zadok, Shallum, ³⁸Hilkiah, Azariah, ³⁹Seraiah, Jehozadak. ⁴⁰Jehozadak was deported when Yahweh, through King Nebuchadnezzar, sent into exile the people of Judah and Jerusalem.

The families of Levi

6 ¹Levi had three sons: Gershon, Kohath and Merari.

²These are the names of the sons of Gershon: Libni and Shimei.

³Sons of Kohath: Amran, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. ⁴Sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of Levi according to their ancestors.

⁵Descendants of Gershon from one generation to the next: Libni, Jahath, Zimmah, ⁶Joah, Iddo, Zerah, Jeatheral.

⁷Descendants of Kohath from one generation to the next: Amminadab, Korah, Assir, ⁸Elkanah, Ebiasaph, Assir, ⁹Tahath, Uriel, Uziah, Shaul. ¹⁰Elkanah had two sons, Amasai and Ahimoth. ¹¹Elkanah, son of Ahimoth, Zophai, Nahath, ¹²Eliab, Jeroham, Elkanah. ¹³The sons of Elkanah were: Samuel his firstborn, and Abijah. Samuel had two sons: Joel, the firstborn, and Abijah, the younger.

¹⁴Descendants of Merari from one generation to the next: Mahli, Libni, ¹⁵Shimei, Uzzah, Shimea, Haggiah, Asaiah.

¹⁶These are the men David named to lead the singing in the Temple of Yahweh when the ark had come to rest there. ¹⁷They were responsible for the singing before the Holy Tent of the Tent of Meeting until Solomon had built the Temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem. They did their duties in accordance with the rules.

¹⁸These are the men who accomplished this ministry, and their sons:

Of the clan of Kohath: Herman, the leader of the first choir, was the son of Joel. His ancestral line went back to Jacob as follows: Herman, Joel, Samuel, ¹⁹Elkanah, Jeroham, Eliel, Toah, Zuph, ²⁰Elkanah, Mahath, Amasai, ²¹Elkanah, Joel, Azariah, Zephaniah, ²²Tahath, Assir, Ebiasaph, Korah, ²³Izhar, Kohath, Levi, Israel.

²⁴His brother Asaph was leader of the second choir. His ancestral line went back to Levi as follows: Asaph, Berechiah, Shimea, ²⁵Michael, Baaseiah, Malchijah, ²⁶Ethni, Zerah, Adaiah, ²⁷Ethan, Zimmah, Shimei, ²⁸Jahath, Gershon, Levi.

²⁹Ethan of the clan of Merari was the leader of the third choir, at the left side. His ancestral line went back to Levi as follows: Ethan, Kishi, Abdi, Malluch, ³⁰Hashabiah, Amaziah, Hilkiyah, ³¹Amzi, Bani, Shemer, ³²Mahli, Mushi, Medrari, Levi.

³³Their brother Levites were in charge of the Holy Tent of the Temple of Yahweh. ³⁴Aaron and his descendants burned the offerings on the altar for burnt offering and on the altar of incense. They were responsible for all the worship in the Most Holy Place and for the atonement for Israel's sins, according to the instructions of Moses, the servant of God.

³⁵This is the line of Aaron's descendants: Eleazar, Phinehas, Abishua, ³⁶Bukki, Uzzi, Zerariah, ³⁷Meraioth, Amariah, Ahitub, ³⁸Zadok, Ahimaaz.

³⁹These are the places they lived in, according to the boundaries of their settlements.

⁴⁰To the sons of Aaron of the Kohath clan (to whom the first share of land was assigned) they gave Hebron in the land of Judah and the pasture lands nearby. ⁴¹The fields and villages of this town, however, had been given to Caleb, son of Jephunneh. ⁴²The following towns were given to the descendants of Aaron: Hebron, a city of refuge, Jattir, Libnah, Eshtemoa, ⁴³Hilen, Debir, ⁴⁴Ashan, and Beth-Shemesh, with pasture lands near them. ⁴⁵In the territory of Benjamin they were given the following towns with their pasture lands: Geba, Alemeth, and Anathoth. A total of thirteen towns were given them for all their families to live in.

⁴⁶To the rest of the clan of Kohath, family by family, ten towns were given from the territory of the half tribe of Manasseh. ⁴⁷The clan of Gershon, family by family, were given thirteen towns from the territories of Issachar, Asher, Naphtali and from the tribe of Manasseh in Bashan. ⁴⁸The clan of Merari, family by family, were given twelve towns from the territories of Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun. ⁴⁹The people of Israel gave these towns with their pasture lands to the Levites.

⁵⁰They received from the territories of Judah, Simeon and Benjamin the towns to which they gave names.

⁵¹The clans of Kohath obtained towns by lot from the tribe of Ephraim. ⁵²They were given the following towns with their pasture lands: Shechem, the city of refuge in the hill country of Ephraim, Gezer, ⁵³Jokmeam, Beth-Horon, ⁵⁴Aijalon, and Gath Rimmon. ⁵⁵In the territory of the half tribe of Manasseh, they were given the towns of Aner and Beileam with their pasture lands.

⁵⁶The clan of Gershon, family by family, were given the following towns with their pasture lands. In the territory of the half tribe of Manasseh: Golan in Bashan, and Ashtaroth. ⁵⁷In the territory of Issachar: Kedesh, Daberath, ⁵⁸Ramoth, and Anem. ⁵⁹In the territory of Asher: Mashal, Abdon, ⁶⁰Hukok, and Rehob. ⁶¹In the territory of Naphtali: Kedesh in Galilee, Hammon, and Kiriathaim.

⁶²To the rest of the clan of Merari were given the following towns with their pasture lands. In the territory of Zebulun: Rimmono and Tabor. ⁶³In the territory of Reuben, beyond the Jordan River near Jericho: Bezer on the high, flat land, Jahzah, ⁶⁴Kedemoth, and Mephaath. ⁶⁵In the territory of Gad: Ramoth in Gilead, Mahanaim, ⁶⁶Heshbon, and Jazer.

Clans and families of the northern tribes

7 ¹Issachar had four sons: Tola, Puah, Jashub, and Shimron.

²Tola had six sons: Uzzi, Rephaiah, Jeriel, Jahmai, Ibsam, and Shemuel. They were heads of families of the clan of Tola and famous warriors. In the time of David, the descendants numbered 22,600. Uzzi had one son, Izrahiah. ³Izrahiah had four sons: Michael, Obadiah, Joel, and Isshiah. All five of these were chiefs ⁴and they were obliged to enlist their troops: 36,000 men, for they had many wives and children. ⁵The family records of all the clans of Issachar listed a total of 87,000 men able to give military service.

⁶Benjamin had three sons: Bela, Becher, and Jediel.

⁷Bela had five sons: Ezbon, Uzzi, Uzziel, Jerimoth and Iri. They were heads of families in the clan and famous warriors. Their family

records listed 22,034 men able to give military service. ⁸Becher had nine sons: Zemirah, Joash, Eliezer, Elioenai, Omri, Jeremoth, Abijah, Anathoth, and Alemeth. ⁹Their family records listed 20,200 men able to give military service. Shuppim and Huppim also belonged to this tribe. ¹⁰Jediael had one son, Bilhan who had seven sons: Jeush, Benjamin, Ehud, Chenaanah, Zethan, Tarshish, and Ahishahar. ¹¹They were heads of families in the clan and famous warriors, 17,200 ready for service in war. ¹²Shuppim and Huppim also belong to this tribe.

¹³Naphtali had four sons: Jahziel, Guni, Jezer, and Shallum. They were descendants of Bilhah.

¹⁴Manasseh had Asriel by his Aramean concubine. She gave birth also to Machir, father of Gilead. ¹⁵And Machir took a wife for Huppim and for Shuppim. The name of his sister was Maacah. And the name of the second was Zelophehad; and Zelophehad had daughters.

¹⁶Maacah, wife of Machir, gave birth to two sons, whom they named Peresh and Sheresh. Peresh had two sons: Ulam and Rakem. ¹⁷Ulam had a son named Bedan. These were the descendants of Gilead, the son of Machir and grandson of Manasseh. ¹⁸Gilead's sister Molecheth had three sons: Ishhod, Abiezer, and Mahlah. ¹⁹Shemida had four sons: Ahian, Shechem, Likhi and Aniam.

²⁰These are the descendants of Ephraim from one generation to the next: Shuthelah, Bered, Tahath, Eleadah, Tahath, ²¹Zabad, Shuthelah. Ephraim's two other sons, Ezer and Elead, were killed when they tried to steal the cattle belonging to the people of Gath. ²²Ephraim, their father, mourned for them for a long time and his brothers came to comfort him. ²³Then Ephraim went to his wife, and she conceived and gave birth to a son whom she called Beriah, because of the trouble that had come to their family. ²⁴Beriah's daughter, Sheerah, built Lower and Upper Beth-horon and Uzzen-sheerah.

Ephraim also had a son named Rephah. The descendants of ²⁵Rephah were as follows: Resheph, Telah, Tahan, ²⁶Ladan, Ammihud, Elishama, ²⁷Nun, Joshua. ²⁸They had lands and settlements in Bethel and its towns, in Naasan to the east in Gezep and its towns to the west, Shechem and its towns, as far as Ayyah and its towns. ²⁹Bethshean, Taanach, Megiddo, Dor, each with its towns, were controlled by the descendants of Manasseh. In all these places lived the descendants of Joseph, son of Jacob.

³⁰Asher had four sons: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, and Beriah; and one daughter, Serah. ³¹Sons of Beriah: Heber and Malchiel. Malchiel was the father of Birzaith. ³²Heber had three sons: Japhlet, Shomer and Ho-

tham; and one daughter Shura. ³³Japhlet had three sons: Pasah, Bimhal and Ashvath. ³⁴Shomar, his brother, also had three sons: Rohgah, Hubbah and Aram. ³⁵His brother Hotham had four sons: Zophah, Imna, Shelesh, and Amal. ³⁶The sons of Zophal were: Suah, Harnepher, Shual, Beri and Imrah, ³⁷Bezer, Hod, Shamma, Shilshah, Ithran and Beerah. ³⁸The sons of Jether: Jephunneh, Pispah, and Ara. ³⁹The sons of Ulla were descendants of Asher. They were heads of families, and famous warriors; ⁴⁰Asher's descendants included 26,000 men able to give military service.

8 ¹Benjamin became father of Bela, his firstborn, Ashbel second, Ahiham third, ²Nohah fourth, Rapha fifth. ³Bela had sons: Addar, Gera, Abihud, ⁴Abishua, Naaman and Ahoah, ⁵Gera, Shephuphan and Hiram.

⁶These are the sons of Ehud. They were heads of families of the inhabitants of Geba and led them into exile at Manahath: ⁷Naaman, Ahijah and Gera. It was he who led them into exile; he became the father of Uzza and Ahihud.

⁸He became father of Shaharaim in the plains of Moab after he had dismissed his wives, Hushim and Baara. ⁹By his new wife he had sons: Jobab, Zibia, Mesha, Malcam, ¹⁰Jeuz, Sachia, Mirmah. These were his sons, heads of families.

¹¹By Hushim he had sons: Abitub and Elpaal. ¹²Sons of Elpaal: Eber, Misham and Shemed: it was he who built Ono and Lud with its outlying towns.

¹³Beriah and Shema. They were heads of families of the inhabitants of Aijalon, who put to flight the inhabitants of Gath. ¹⁴Shashak was his brother.

Jeremoth, ¹⁵Zebadiah, Arad, Eder, ¹⁶Michael, Ishpah, Joha were sons of Beriah. ¹⁷Zebadiah, Meshullam, Hizki, Haber, ¹⁸Ishmerai, Izliah, Jobab were sons of Elpaal. ¹⁹Jakim, Zichri, Zabdi, ²⁰Elioenai, Zillethai, Eliel, ²¹Adaiah, Beraiah, Shimran were sons of Shimei.

²²Ishpan, Eber, Eliel, ²³Abdon, Zichri, Hanan, ²⁴Hananiah, Elam, Anthothijah, ²⁵Iphdeiah, Penuel were sons of Shashak. ²⁶Shamsherai, Shehariah, Athaliah, ²⁷Jaare-shaiah, Elijah, Zichri were sons of Jeroham. ²⁸These were the heads of families, grouped according to their kinship. They lived in Jerusalem.

²⁹At Gibeon lived Abi-gibeon, whose wife was Maccah. ³⁰His firstborn son was Abdon, then Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner, Nadab, ³¹Gedor, Ahio, Zecher ³²and Mikloth who became father of Shimeah. These also, near their kinsmen, lived with their kinsmen in Jerusalem.

³³Ner was father of Kish, Kish father of

Saul, Saul father of Jonathan, Malchi-shua, Abinadab and Eshbaal. ³⁴Son of Jonathan: Meribbaal. Meribbaal became father of Micah. ³⁵Sons of Micah: Pithon, Melech, Tarea, Ahaz. ³⁶Ahaz became father of Jehoaddah, Jehoaddah father of Alemeth, Azmaveth and Zimri. Zimri became father of Moza, ³⁷Moza father of Binea. Raphah his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son. ³⁸Azel had six sons, whose names were these: Azrikam, Bocheru, his firstborn, then Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah, Hanan. All these were sons of Azel. ³⁹Sons of Eshek his brother: Ulam, his firstborn, Jeush second, Eliphelet third. ⁴⁰Ulam had sons, stout fighting men and bowmen. They had numerous sons and grandsons, a hundred and fifty of them.

All these were sons of Benjamin.

Inhabitants of Jerusalem after the exile

9 ¹All the Israelites were classified in related groups, but they were listed in the Book of the Kings of Israel. As for those of Judah, they were deported to Babylon for their faithlessness. ²The first who came back to their towns and their estates were Israelites, priests, Levites and helpers. ³So in Jerusalem lived Judaeans, Benjaminites, Ephraimites and Manassites.

⁴Uthai son of Ammihud, son of Omri, son of Imri, son of Bani, one of the sons of Perez son of Judah. ⁵Of the Shilonites: Asaiah, the firstborn, and his sons. ⁶Of the sons of Zerah: Jeuel. Also their kinsmen: six hundred and ninety.

⁷Of the tribe of Benjamin: Sallu son of Meshullam, son of Hodaviah, son of Hassenuah; ⁸Ibneiah son of Jeroham; Elah son of Uzzi, son of Michri; Mesullam son of Shephatiah, son of Reuel, son of Ibrijah. ⁹They had nine hundred and fifty-six kinsmen, grouped according to their kinship. All these men were heads of families.

¹⁰Of the priests: Jedaiah, Jehoiarib, Jachin, ¹¹Azariah son of Hilkiyah, son of Meshullam, son of Zadok, son of Meraioth, son of Ahitub, ruler of the house of God. ¹²Adaiah son of Jeroham, son of Pashhur, son of Malchijah, Maasai son of Adiel, son of Jahzerah, son of Meshullam, son of Meshillemith, son of Immer. ¹³They had kinsmen, heads of families, one thousand seven hundred and sixty men who undertook the duties of the Temple of God.

¹⁴Of the Levites: Shemaiah son of Hashub, son of Azrikam, son of Hashabiah of the sons of Merari, ¹⁵Bakbakkar, Heresh, Galal, Mattaniah son of Mica, son of Zichri, son of Asaph, ¹⁶Obadiah son of Shemaiah, son of Galal, son of Jeduthun, and Berechiah son of Asa, son of Elkanah who lived in the villages of the Netophathites.

¹⁷The keepers of the gate: Shallum,

Akkub, Talmon, Ahiman and their kinsmen. Shallum, was their head, ¹⁸and they still keep station at the royal gate, to the east. These were the gatekeepers of the camp of the Levites. ¹⁹Shallum son of Kore, son of Ebiasaph, son of Korah, with his brother Korahites, of the same family, were responsible for the liturgical service; they were "keepers of the threshold for the Tent," for their fathers had guarded the entrance of the camp of Yahweh. ²⁰At one time, Phinehas son of Eleazar had ruled them and they served before Yahweh. ²¹Zechariah son of Meshelemiah was keeper of the gate at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. ²²All the keepers of the gate at the thresholds were picked men; there were two hundred and twelve of them and they were registered in their various villages. These were appointed by David and Samuel the seer because of their loyalty. ²³They and their sons had the guardianship of the gates of the House of Yahweh, the house of the Tent. ²⁴On the four sides stood the keepers of the gate, east, west, north, and south. ²⁵Their kinsmen in their villages would come to join them for a week from time to time, ²⁶since the four head gatekeepers themselves lived there permanently. Some of them were responsible for the chambers and treasuries of the house of God. ²⁷They spent the night in the precincts of the house of God, their duties being to guard it and they had the keys with them to open the rooms at the morning.

²⁸Some of them were responsible for the furnishings of worship; they counted them whenever they put them away and took them out. ²⁹Others were in charge of the furniture and all the sacred furnishings, the fine flour, the wine, the oil, the incense, the spices, ³⁰but only the priests prepared the mixture for the spices.

³¹One of the Levites, Mattithiah the firstborn of Shallum the Korahite, was responsible for the offerings that were to be baked on the pan. ³²Some of their kinsmen the Kohathites were responsible for the loaves to be set out in rows sabbath by sabbath.

³³These are the cantors, heads of the levitical families. When free from service they lived in the Temple chambers, because they were on duty day and night.

³⁴These were the heads of the families of the Levites, grouped according to their families. These heads lived in Jerusalem.

The ancestors of Saul. His death.

³⁵In the city of Gibeon lived Abigibea and Jeiel, whose wife was called Maacah. ³⁶His firstborn was Abdon, then Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner, Nadab, ³⁷Gedor, Ahio, Zechariah, and Mikloth. ³⁸Mikloth became father of Shimeam. Their descendants lived in Jerusalem near other families of their clans.

³⁹Ner became father of Kish, Kish father of Saul, Saul father of Jonathan, Malchi-shua, Abinadab and Eshbaal. ⁴⁰Jonathan's son Merribbaal, became father of Micah. ⁴¹Micah had four sons: Pithon, Melech, Tahrea and Ahaz. ⁴²Ahaz became father of Jarah, Jarah father of Alemeth, Azmaveth and Zimri; Zimri became father of Moza, ⁴³Moza father of Binea, whose son was ⁴⁴Rephaiah, whose son was Eleasah, whose son was Azel. Azel had six sons; their names were these: Azrikam, his firstborn, then Ishmael, Bocheru, Sheariah, Obadiah, Hanan. These were the sons of Azel.

10 ¹The Philistines attacked Israel, and the Israelites fled or were killed on Mount Gilboa. ²The Philistines caught up with Saul and killed Jonathan, Abinadab and Malchi-shua, the sons of Saul. ³The fighting grew heavy about Saul; he was hit by enemy arrows and badly wounded. ⁴Then Saul said to the young man carrying his weapon, "Draw your sword and kill me. I do not want these godless Philistines to come and gloat over me." But the young man was afraid and would not do it. So Saul took his own sword and threw himself on it. ⁵Then the young man threw himself on his sword too and died. ⁶And so Saul died, he and his three sons and all his own together.

⁷All the Israelites who were in the valley heard that the army had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead. So they abandoned their towns and ran away. The Philistines then came in and occupied them.

⁸When the Philistines came on the following day to strip the dead, they found Saul and his sons lying on Mount Gilboa. ⁹They stripped him and, taking his head and his armor, had them carried around the land of the Philistines to proclaim the good news to their idols and their people. ¹⁰They placed his armor in the temple of their god, but his head they hung in the temple of Dagon.

¹¹When all the people of Gilead heard all that the Philistines had done to Saul, ¹²the valiant men went and took the bodies of Saul and his sons away and brought them to Jabesh. They buried their bones under the oak tree in Jabesh, and they fasted for seven days.

¹³Saul died because he had been unfaithful to Yahweh: he had disobeyed the commands of Yahweh; he had even consulted the spirits of the dead. ¹⁴As he had not consulted Yahweh, Yahweh put him to death and gave control of the kingdom to David son of Jesse.

David is anointed king

11 ¹All the people of Israel went to David at Hebron "Look, we are your own flesh and blood. ²Even when Saul was our king,

you led Israel in battle; and Yahweh your God said to you, 'You are the man who shall be shepherd of my people Israel and shall be ruler over them.'" ³So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and David made a covenant with them at Hebron in the presence of Yahweh, and he became king of Israel, just as Yahweh had promised through Samuel.

⁴David with all the Israelites attacked Jerusalem (that is to say, Jebus); there lived the Jebusites. ⁵They said to David, "You will not get in here." But David captured the fortress of Zion, and it became the City of David. ⁶David said, "The first man to attack the Jebusites shall become leader and commander of the army." Joab son of Zeruiah attacked first and became commander. ⁷David went to live in the fortress, and because of this it was called the City of David. ⁸He then built a wall around the city, and the Millo as well as the surrounding wall, while Joab restored the rest of the city. ⁹David grew greater and greater, and Yahweh Sabaoth was with him.

David's champions

¹⁰These are the famous warriors of David, those who during his rule struggled with him and with all Israel, to make him king as Yahweh had promised. ¹¹This is the list of David's warriors: Jashobeam the Hachmonite, leader of the Thirty; one day he wielded his battle-ax against three hundred whom he killed at one time.

¹²After him there was Eleazar son of Dodo, the Ahohite, one of the three champions. ¹³He was with David at Pasdammim where the Philistines had gathered to attack. There was a field full of barley there. When the Israelites started to run away, ¹⁴Eleazar took a stand in the middle of the field, defended it and fought the Philistines. So Yahweh brought about a great victory.

¹⁵The Thirty leading soldiers went down to David at the rock near the Cave of Adullam while a company of Philistines was encamped in the Valley of the Rephaim. ¹⁶David was then on a fortified hill, and a group of Philistines had occupied Bethlehem. ¹⁷David sighed, "Oh, if someone would fetch me a drink of water from the well by the gate of Bethlehem!" ¹⁸At this The Three, forcing their way through the Philistine camp, drew water from the well by the gate of Bethlehem and, bringing it away, presented it to David. But David would drink none of it and poured it out as an offering to Yahweh. ¹⁹"God keep me," he said, "from doing this! Am I to drink the blood of these men? For at the risk of their lives they brought it." And so he would not drink it. Such were the deeds of The Three.

²⁰Abishai, the brother of Joab, was leader

of The Thirty. He fought with his spear against three hundred whom he killed, winning himself a name among The Thirty. ²¹He was the most famous of The Thirty and became their captain, but he was not as famous as The Three.

²²Benaiah son of Jehoiada, a hero from Kabzeel, did many brave deeds; he killed the two Ariels of Moab. One snowy day, he went down and killed the lion in a pit. ²³He also killed an Egyptian, a huge man seven and a half feet tall. The Egyptian had a gigantic spear in his hand, but Benaiah attacked him with a club, snatched the spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed the man with it. ²⁴Such were the deeds of Benaiah son of Jehoiada, winning him a name among the thirty leading soldiers. ²⁵He was famous among The Thirty, but he was not as famous as The Three. David put him in command of his bodyguard.

²⁶The other valiant warriors were: Asahel the brother of Joab. Elhanan son of Dodo, from Bethlehem. ²⁷Shammoth from Harod, Helez the Pelonite. ²⁸Ira son of Ikkes, from Tekoa. Abiezer from Anathoth. ²⁹Sibbecai from Hushah. Ilai from Ahoh. ³⁰Maharai from Netophah. Heled son of Baanah, from Netophah. ³¹Ithai son of Ribai, from Gibeah of Benjamin. Benaiah from Pirathon. ³²Hurai from the valleys near Gaash. Abiel from Bethhaarabah. ³³Azmaveth from Baharum. Eliahba from Shaalbon. ³⁴Benehashem from Gizon. Jonathan son of Shagee, from Harar. ³⁵Ahiam son of Sachar, from Harar. Eliphelet son of Ur. ³⁶Hepher from Mecherah. Ahijah the Pelonite. ³⁷Hezro from Carmel. Naarai son of Ezbai. ³⁸Joel the brother of Nathan. Mibhar son of Hagri. ³⁹Zehek the Ammonite. Naharai from Beeroth, armorbearer to Joab son of Zeruah. ⁴⁰Ira from Jattir. Gareb from Jattir. ⁴¹Uriah the Hittite. Zabad son of Ahlai.

⁴²Adina son of Shiza (a leading member of the tribe of Reuben, with his own group of thirty soldiers). ⁴³Hanan son of Maacah. Joshaphat the Mithnite. ⁴⁴Uzzia from Ashteroth. Shama and Jeiel, sons of Hotham the Aroerite. ⁴⁵Jediaelson of Shimri, and Joha his brother, the Tizite. ⁴⁶Eliel the Mahavite. Jeribai and Joshaviah, sons of Elnaam. Ithmah the Moabite. ⁴⁷Eliel, Obed, and Jaasiel from Zoba.

David's early followers

12 ¹The following men came to David in Ziklag where he had gone to escape from King Saul. They were valiant and reliable warriors, members of the tribe of Benjamin, to which Saul belonged. ²They were archers who could use either the right or the left hand, both in slinging stones and in shooting arrows with the bow. ³They were Ahiezer the leader, and Joash, sons of Hashe-

mar from Gibeah, Jeziel and Pelet, sons of Azmaveth, Berach and Jehu from Anathoth, ⁴Ismaiah from Gibeon, a famous soldier and one of the leaders of The Thirty; ⁵Jeremiah, Jahaziel, Johanan and Jozabad from Gederoth, ⁶Eluzai, Jerimoth, Bealiah, She-mariah, Shephatiah from Hariph, ⁷Elkanah, Eshiah, Azarel, Joezer, Jashobeam, Korahites, ⁸Joelah, Zebadiah, sons of Jeroham from Gedor.

⁹Some Gadites also joined David's troops when he was at the desert fort. They were valiant fighting men and experts with shield and spear. They were as fierce-looking as lions and as quick as mountain deer. ¹⁰Ezer was the leader, Obadiah second, Eliab third, ¹¹Mishmannah fourth, Jeremiah fifth. ¹²Attai sixth, Eliel seventh, ¹³Johanan eighth, Elzabad ninth, ¹⁴Jeremiah tenth, Machbannai eleventh. ¹⁵These sons of God were troop commanders, each one in command of a unit, the junior officers placed over a hundred, and senior officers over a thousand. ¹⁶These are the men who crossed the Jordan in the first month, when it overflowed its course, and scattered all the people who lived on its banks, both east and west.

¹⁷Those men from the tribes of Benjamin and Judah came to David at the fort. ¹⁸David went to meet them and said, "If you come to me as friends, to give me help, then I am ready to join you. But if it is to betray me to my enemies, when I have done no wrong, then may the God of our ancestors see and punish you."

¹⁹Then God's spirit took control of one of them, Amasai, leader of The Thirty, and he called out: "Yours we are, David! We are with you, son of Jesse! Peace to you, peace to him that helps you, for God is on your side."

David welcomed them and made them officers in his army.

²⁰Some people from the tribe of Manasseh went over to David's side as he was setting out with the Philistines to fight Saul. But David did not help the Philistines, because their chiefs, after consultation, sent him back to Ziklag. They were afraid he would betray them to his former master Saul. ²¹He was on his way to Ziklag when these Manassites joined him: Adnah, Jozabad, Jediael, Michael, Jozabad, Elihu, Zillethai, commanders of thousands in Manasseh. ²²They were reinforcements for David and his troops, since they were all outstanding soldiers and became officers in the army. ²³Indeed new men joined David's forces almost every day, so that his camp grew into an enormous camp.

The warriors who assured David's kingship

²⁴These are the figures from the list of experienced warriors who joined David at

Hebron to transfer Saul's kingship to him in accordance with the command of Yahweh:

²⁵ Sons of Judah carrying shield and spear: 6,800 men equipped for battle. ²⁶ Of the sons of Simeon: 7,100 well-trained men. ²⁷ Of the sons of Levi: 4,600 ²⁸ in addition to Jehoiada, in command of the Aaronites, with 3,700 men; ²⁹ Zadok, a young and able fighter and 22 commanders of his family.

³⁰ Of the sons of Benjamin: 3,000 kinsmen of Saul, most of them hitherto in the service of the House of Saul. ³¹ Of the sons of Ephraim: 20,800 men famous in their families. ³² Of the half tribe of Manasseh: 18,000 men assigned by name to go and proclaim David king. ³³ Of the sons of Issachar, expert in knowing the times when Israel should take action, and the way to do it: 200 leaders and all their kinsmen under their command.

³⁴ Of Zebulun: 50,000 men fit for service, ready to fight with weapons of every kind. ³⁵ Of Naphtali: 1,000 commanders, and with them 37,000 men armed with shield and spear. ³⁶ Of the Danites: 28,600 men ready for battle. ³⁷ Of Asher: 40,000 men fit for service, ready for battle. ³⁸ From Transjordan: 120,000 men of Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh, with weapons of every kind.

³⁹ All these warriors, ready for battle, came to Hebron willingly to proclaim David king over all Israel; and the rest of Israel, too, were all of one mind in making David king. ⁴⁰ For three days they stayed there, eating and drinking with David, for their kinsmen had sent food for them. ⁴¹ Moreover from as far as Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali their neighbors brought provisions, by donkey and camel, mule and ox – flour cakes, fig cakes, bunches of raisins, wine, oil, quantities of oxen and sheep; for there was joy in Israel.

The ark is brought to Jerusalem

13 ¹ David consulted with the commanders of thousands, of hundreds, and with all the leaders. ² To the whole assembly of Israel David said, "If you agree and if Yahweh our God wills it so, we will send messengers to the rest of our brothers throughout the territories of Israel, and also to the priests and Levites in their towns and nearby lands, and tell them to gather here with us. ³ We will then go and get the ark of our God, for in the time of Saul we neglected it."

⁴ They agreed to this, for in the eyes of all the people it was the right thing to do. ⁵ So David gathered all the people together from the Shihor of Egypt to the Pass of Hamath to bring the ark of God from Kiriath-jearim. ⁶ Then David and all Israel went up to Baalah, to Kiriath-jearim in Judah, to bring up the ark of God which bears the name of Yahweh who is seated on the Cherub. ⁷ At Abinadab's

house they placed the ark of God on a new cart. Uzziah and Ahio were leading the cart. ⁸ David and all Israel danced before God with all their might, singing to the accompaniment of lyres, harps, tambourines, cymbals, and trumpets. ⁹ When they came to the threshing floor of the Javelin, the oxen stumbled, and Uzzah stretched out his hand and took hold of the ark. ¹⁰ Then the anger of Yahweh blazed out against Uzzah, and he killed him because he had laid his hand on the ark, and he died there in the presence of God. ¹¹ David was disturbed that Yahweh had punished Uzzah in anger, and so that place has been called Perez-uzzah ever since.

¹² David went in fear of God that day and said, "How can I bring the ark of God to my home?" ¹³ So David did not take the ark home to the City of David, but took it to the house of a man named Obed-edom of Gath. ¹⁴ The ark of God remained with the family of Obed-edom, in his house, for three months, and Yahweh blessed the family of Obed-edom and everything that belonged to him.

14 ¹ Hiram, king of Tyre, sent messengers to David with cedar wood and stonemasons and carpenters to build him a palace. ² David then knew that Yahweh had established him as king over Israel, and that for the sake of his people Israel his kingdom was being made prosperous.

³ At Jerusalem David took more wives and fathered more sons and daughters. ⁴ These are the names of the children born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, ⁵ Ibhar, Elishua, Elpelet, ⁶ Nogab, Nepheg, Japhia, ⁷ Elishama, Beeliada, Elipelet.

⁸ When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king of all Israel, they all marched up to capture him. On hearing this, David went out to meet them. ⁹ When the Philistines arrived, they began plundering the Valley of the Rephaim. ¹⁰ David consulted Yahweh, "Shall I attack the Philistines? Will you turn them over to me?" Yahweh answered him, "Attack! I will turn them over to you." ¹¹ The Philistines went up to Baal-perazim and there David defeated them. David said, "God has broken through them just as water breaks through a dam." For this reason that place was called Baal Perazim. ¹² They had left their gods behind them there, and David ordered them to be burned.

¹³ Again the Philistines started plundering in the valley. ¹⁴ David again consulted God, and God answered, "Do not attack them from the front; go around and get ready to attack them from the other side, near the balsam trees. ¹⁵ When you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, launch your attack, for God is going out ahead of you

to defeat the army of the Philistines.”¹⁶ David did as God had ordered, and they defeated the Philistine army from Gibeon as far as Gezer.

¹⁷David became famous everywhere, and Yahweh made every nation afraid of him.

15¹David put up buildings for himself in the City of David and prepared a place for the ark of God, and he put up a tent for it.² Then he said, “Only the Levites shall move the ark of God, since Yahweh has chosen them to carry the ark and to serve him always.”

³Then David gathered all Israel together in Jerusalem to bring the ark of God up to the place he had prepared for it.⁴ David called together the sons of Aaron and the sons of Levi:⁵ of the sons of Kohath, Uriel the chief and his hundred and twenty kinsmen;⁶ of the sons of Merari, Asaiah and his two hundred and twenty kinsmen;⁷ of the sons of Gershon, Joel and his hundred and thirty kinsmen;⁸ of the sons of Elizaphah, Shemaiah and his two hundred kinsmen;⁹ of the sons of Hebron, Eliel and eighty kinsmen;¹⁰ of the sons of Uzziel, Amminadab and his hundred and twelve kinsmen.

¹¹David called in the priests Zadok and Abiathar, and the Levites Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel and Amminadab.¹² He told them, “You are the heads of families of the Levites. Purify yourselves, you and your brothers, and bring the ark of Yahweh, the God of Israel, up to the place I have prepared for it.¹³ The first time you were not there to carry it and Yahweh our God punished us for not consulting him as we should have done.”

¹⁴So the priests and the Levites purified themselves to bring up the ark of Yahweh, the God of Israel,¹⁵ and the Levites carried the ark of God with the poles on their shoulders, as Moses had ordered according to the command of Yahweh.

¹⁶David then told the leaders of the Levites to assign duties for some Levites to sing and play a joyful tune with their various musical instruments: harps and lyres and cymbals.¹⁷ The Levites then appointed Heman son of Joel, Asaph son of Berechiah, one of his brothers, Ethan son of Kushaiah, one of their Merarite kinsmen;¹⁸ and with them, next in rank, their kinsmen as keepers of the gate: Zechariah son of Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattithiah, Eliphehu, Mikneiah, Obed-edom, Jeiel.¹⁹ Heman, Asaph and Ethan the cantors, were to clash the cymbals of bronze;²⁰ Zechariah, Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah and Benaiah were to play the keyed harp.²¹ Mattithiah, Eliphehu, Mikneiah, Obed-edom, Jeiel and Azariah, giving the beat, were to play the

octave lyre.²² Chenaniah was chosen to be in charge of the transportation, because he was very skillful at doing these things.²³ Berechiah and Elkanah were to be gatekeepers to the ark.²⁴ The priests Shebaniah, Joshaphat, Nethanel, Amasal, Zechariah, Benaiah and Eliezer were to sound the trumpet before the ark of God. Obed-edom and Jehiah were to be gatekeepers to the ark.

²⁵So David, with the leaders of Israel and the commanders of thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of Yahweh from Obed-edom’s house with great rejoicing.²⁶ And while God was securing the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of Yahweh, they sacrificed seven bulls and seven sheep.²⁷ David was wearing a robe of fine linen, like all the Levites who carried the ark, as well as the cantors and Chenaniah, the officer in charge of its transportation. David also wore the linen.²⁸ Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of Yahweh with shouts of joy to the sound of the horn, trumpets, and cymbals, making music with harp and lyre.²⁹ Now as the ark of the covenant of Yahweh entered the City of David, Michal the daughter of Saul was watching from the window and saw King David dancing and leaping with joy and she despised him.

16¹They brought the ark of God in and put it inside the tent that David had prepared for it; and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings to God.² And when David had finished offering the sacrifices, he blessed the people in the name of Yahweh.³ He then distributed to all the Israelites, men and women, a loaf of bread each, a piece of roasted meat, and a raisin cake.

David organizes the levitical cult

⁴David appointed some of the Levites to minister before the ark of Yahweh, to commemorate, thank and praise Yahweh, the God of Israel:⁵ first Asaph, second Zechariah, then Uzziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-edom, Jeiel. These were to play the harp and the lyre, while Asaph was to clash the cymbals.⁶ The priests Benaiah and Jahaziel were to keep sounding the trumpet before the ark of the covenant of Yahweh.⁷ That day, David entrusted this song of praise to Asaph and his brethren:

⁸Give thanks to Yahweh, call upon his name, proclaim his deeds to the peoples.

⁹Sing to him, sing his praise; tell of all his marvels.

¹⁰Glory in his holy name, let the hearts that seek Yahweh rejoice!

¹¹Seek Yahweh and his strength, seek his face untiringly;

¹²Recall the wondrous deeds he has done, his miracles, the judgments from his mouth.

¹³Descendants of Israel his servant, sons of Jacob his chosen one,

¹⁴he is Yahweh our God; he rules over all the earth. ¹⁵He remembers his covenant forever, his promises for many generations,

¹⁶the covenant he made with Abraham, his promise to Isaac,

¹⁷That he gave as law to Jacob, an everlasting covenant for Israel.

¹⁸For he said, "I give you a land Canaan, your own possession,"

¹⁹when they were easily counted, few in number, strangers to the country.

²⁰They wandered from nation to nation, from one kingdom to another.

²¹But he let no one oppress them, and punished kings for their sake:

²²"Do not touch my anointed ones, do not harm my prophets."

²³Sing to Yahweh, all the earth. Proclaim his salvation day after day.

²⁴Tell his glory among the nations and his wonders to every people.

²⁵Yahweh is great, and highly to be praised, more fearsome than all gods.

²⁶Nothingness are all the gods of the nations, Yahweh himself made the heavens;

²⁷splendor and majesty go before him, praise and joy are in his sanctuary.

²⁸Give to Yahweh, families of the peoples, give to Yahweh glory and praise. ²⁹Give to Yahweh the glory due his name. Bring out offerings and bow before him, worship Yahweh in his sacred ornaments.

³⁰Be quiet before him, all the earth! Firm has he made the world, not to be moved.

³¹Let the heavens be glad, and the earth rejoice! Say among the nations, "Yahweh is King!"

³²Let the sea thunder and all that it holds, let the fields exult and all that is in them,

³³let all the trees cry out for joy, and rejoice before Yahweh, for he comes to rule the earth.

³⁴Give thanks to Yahweh, for he is good, his love endures forever.

³⁵Say, "Save us, O God, our Savior, gather us and deliver us from among the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in praising you."

³⁶Blessed be Yahweh the God of Israel from all eternity and forever! And let all the people say, "Amen! Alleluia!"

³⁷David left there, before the ark of the Covenant of Yahweh, Asaph and his brother Levites with the permanent charge of the worship that was held before the ark as each day's ritual required. ³⁸He left also Obededom, with his sixty-eight kinsmen. Obededom son of Jeduthun, and Hosah were to be keepers of the gate.

³⁹He left Zadok the priest and the priests, his kinsmen, before the Holy Tent of Yahweh

at the High place in Gibeon ⁴⁰to offer burnt offerings to Yahweh regularly, morning and evening, on the altar for burnt offerings and to carry out all that is written in the Law of Yahweh laid down for Israel. ⁴¹With them were Heman and Jeduthun and the rest of those who were chosen and assigned by name to give praise to God, "For his love is everlasting." ⁴²With them were Heman and Jeduthun who were to sound the trumpets, cymbals and musical instruments accompanying the hymns to God. The sons of Jeduthun were given charge of the gate.

⁴³Then all went away, each to his own house, and David returned to bless his household.

The prophecy of Nathan

17 ¹Once David was living in his palace, he said to the prophet Nathan, "Here am I living in a house of cedar, while the ark of Yahweh's covenant dwells beneath a tent cloth." ²Nathan said to David, "Do all that is in your mind, for God is with you."

³But that very night Yahweh said to Nathan, ⁴"Go and tell my servant David, 'Yahweh says this: You yourself are not to build a temple for me to live in. ⁵I have never lived in a temple from the day I brought Israel out until today, but went from tent to tent, from one shelter to another. ⁶In all my journeying with the whole of Israel, did I say to any one of the rulers of Israel whom I had appointed as shepherds of my people: Why do you not build me a temple of cedar wood?"

⁷This you must say to my servant David: This is the word of Yahweh Sabaoth: I took you from following the sheep, to be leader of my people Israel. ⁸I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have defeated all your enemies as you advanced. I will make your name as great as the name of the greatest on earth. ⁹I will provide a place for my people Israel; I will plant them there and they shall live in that place and never be disturbed again; nor shall the wicked ever again oppress them, as they did ¹⁰in the days when I appointed judges over my people Israel. For now I will subdue all their enemies. Moreover I tell you that I will build you a house. ¹¹And when your days are ended and you must die and be buried with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your own sons, and I will make his kingdom strong. ¹²He will build a temple for me and I will make his throne firm forever. ¹³I will be a father to him and he a son to me. I will not withdraw my support from him, as I withdrew it from Saul. ¹⁴I will put him in charge of my people and his kingdom shall be established forever."

¹⁵Nathan told David accordingly all these words and this vision.

David's prayer

¹⁶King David then went in and, seated before Yahweh, said: "I am not worthy of what you have already done for me, Yahweh God, nor is my family. ¹⁷Yet in your eyes, O God, this is still not enough. For you have made a promise for my descendants reaching into the distant future and you have looked on me as a great man. ¹⁸What more can I say to you? For you know your servant David. ¹⁹You yourself have done this because you have looked kindly on your servant and you wanted to show your own greatness.

²⁰O Yahweh, there is none like you, no God except you alone, that we have ever heard of. ²¹Is there another people on the earth like your people Israel, whom you rescued from slavery in Egypt to make them your own people, giving yourself a name for great and terrible things by driving nations out before your people whom you rescued from Egypt?

²²You made your people Israel your own people forever; and you, Yahweh, have become their God. ²³Now, Yahweh, let the promise you have made to me and to my descendants be always kept. ²⁴May this promise hold good and your name be exalted forever; may they say, 'Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, is God for Israel.' And let my descendants be established before you forever.

²⁵O my God, you have just made known to me that you will build me a house; because of this I have to offer this prayer in your presence. ²⁶Yes, Yahweh, you are God indeed, and you have made this kind promise to me. ²⁷Be pleased, then, to bless my house so that they may remain forever in your favor. You, Yahweh, are the one who blesses, and your blessing will rest on them forever."

The wars of David

18 ¹After this, David defeated the Philistines and subdued them, taking Gath and its outlying villages. ²He also defeated the Moabites; the Moabites became subject to David, paying him taxes.

³At Hamath David defeated Hadadezer, king of Zobah, who was trying to gain control of the territory by the river Euphrates. ⁴David captured one thousand chariots, seven thousand horsemen and twenty thousand foot soldiers from him; David hamstringed all the chariot teams, keeping only a hundred of them. ⁵The Arameans of Damascus came to the help of Hadadezer, king of Zobah, but David killed twenty-two thousand men of the Arameans. ⁶Then David established governors in Aram of Damascus, and the Arameans became subject to David, paying him taxes. Wherever David went, Yahweh gave him victory.

⁷David took the golden shields of the guards of Hadadezer and brought them to Jerusalem. ⁸From Tibhath and from Cun, towns belonging to Hadadezer, David took a great quantity of bronze; with this Solomon would make the bronze Sea and the bronze pillars and furnishings.

⁹When Tou, king of Hamath, heard that David had defeated the entire army of Hadadezer, king of Zobah, ¹⁰he sent his son Hadoram to King David to greet him and to congratulate him on fighting and defeating Hadadezer, since Hadadezer was the enemy of Tou. Hadoram brought articles of every kind in gold, silver and bronze, ¹¹which King David also consecrated to Yahweh together with the silver and gold he had taken from all the nations: Edom, Moab, Ammonites, Philistines, Amalek.

¹²After that David defeated the Edomites in the Valley of Salt, eighteen thousand of them. ¹³He imposed governors on Edom, and all the Edomites became subject to David. Wherever David went, Yahweh gave him victory.

¹⁴David ruled over all Israel, administering law and justice to all his people. ¹⁵Joab son of Zeruiah was in command of the army; Jehoshapat son of Ahilud was recorder; ¹⁶Zadok son of Ahitub and Abiathar son of Ahimelech were priests; Shavsha was secretary; ¹⁷Benaiah son of Jehoiada was in command of the Cheretites and Pelethites; David's sons were the chief assistants of the King.

19 ¹Afterwards Nahash, king of the Ammonites, died and his son Hanun became king. ²David thought, "I will show kindness to Hanun, son of Nahash, since his father was kind to me." And David sent messengers with his condolences on his father's death. But when David's servants reached Hanun in the land of the Ammonites to present these condolences, ³the Ammonite leaders said to Hanun, "Do you think David means to honor your father when he sends you messengers of sympathy? On the contrary he has sent them here as spies to explore the land, so that he can conquer it." ⁴Hanun had David's servants seized, shaved their beards, cut their clothes half-way up to the hips and sent them away. ⁵As soon as David was told what had happened to these men, he sent someone to meet them, for the men were too ashamed to return home. And he said, "Stay in Jericho, until your beards have grown again, and come back then."

⁶The Ammonites saw that they had made David their enemy and so Hanun and the Ammonites sent a thousand talents of silver to hire chariots and charioteers from the Aramaeans of Upper Mesopotamia, of

Maacah and of Zobah.⁷ They hired thirty-two thousand chariots; also the king of Maacah with his army. These came and encamped before Medeba, while the Ammonites came out from all their cities and got ready to fight.⁸ When David heard this, he sent Joab with the whole army and the warriors.⁹ The Ammonites marched out and took up their positions at the entrance to the town, but the kings who had come remained in the open country.¹⁰ Joab, seeing that he had to fight on two fronts, to his front and to his rear, chose the best fighters of the Israelites and drew them up in line facing the Aramaeans.¹¹ He placed the rest of the troops under the command of his brother Abishai, to face the Ammonites. He said to him,¹² "If the Aramaeans prove too strong for me, you shall come to my help; if the Ammonites prove too strong for you, I will come to yours."¹³ Take courage and fight hard for the sake of our people and the towns of our God. And may Yahweh do as he thinks right."

¹⁴ Joab and the force with him advanced to attack the Aramaeans, who fled before him.¹⁵ When the Ammonites saw that the Aramaeans were running away, they too fled before Abishai, Joab's brother, and withdrew into their town. Then Joab came back to Jerusalem.

¹⁶ Seeing that they had been defeated by Israel, the Aramaeans sent messengers and mobilized the Aramaeans from beyond the river, with Shophach, commander of Hadadezer's army, at their head.¹⁷ News of this was brought to David, who gathered the Israelite troops, crossed the Jordan, and met them. David drew up his line of battle facing the Aramaeans, and the fighting began.¹⁸ But the Aramaeans fled before Israel, and David killed seven thousand of their chariot teams and forty thousand foot soldiers. He also killed Shophach, their general.¹⁹ When the kings who were subject to Hadadezer saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they made peace with David and became subject to him. After this the Aramaeans refused to give help to the Ammonites.

20 ¹ At the turn of the year, the time when kings go to war, Joab set out with the army to invade the land of the Ammonites and went to lay siege to Rabbah. David, however, remained in Jerusalem. Joab attacked Rabbah and destroyed it.² David took the gold crown from the head of the Ammonite idol Milcom; they found that it weighed about seventy five pounds. In it was set a precious stone which made an ornament for David's head. He carried off a great quantity of loot from the town.³ He brought away its population and set them to work with saws, iron picks and axes. David treated all the Ammonite towns in the same way. Then

David and the whole army returned to Jerusalem.

⁴ After this, war broke out again with the Philistines at Gezer. This was when Sibbecai of Hushah killed Sippai, a descendant of the Rephaim. The Philistines were defeated.⁵ War with the Philistines broke out again, and Elhanan son of Jair killed Lahmi, the brother of Goliath of Gath, the shaft of whose spear was as thick as a weaver's beam.⁶ There was another battle at Gath, where there was a giant with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in all. He too was a descendant of Raphaim.⁷ He defied Israel and Jonathan, son of David's brother Shimea, killed him.

⁸ These men were descended from Raphaim of Gath and they were killed by David and his guards.

The census

21 ¹ Satan wanted to bring trouble on the people of Israel and so he made David take a census of the Israelites.² David said to Joab and to the senior army officers, "Go, and take a census of Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, then come back that I may know their number."³ Joab said, "May Yahweh multiply the people a hundred times! My lord king, are they not all your servants? Why do you want to do this? Will you bring guilt upon Israel?"

⁴ But the king enforced his order on Joab, and Joab went away, traveling through the whole country of Israel before he returned to Jerusalem.⁵ Joab gave David the figures for the census of the people: the whole of Israel numbered one million, one hundred thousand men capable of drawing sword, and Judah four hundred and seventy thousand capable of drawing sword.⁶ But Joab disapproved of the king's command, and, because of this he had not taken any census of Levi or of Benjamin.

⁷ God looked with displeasure on what had been done and so he began to punish Israel.⁸ Then David said to God, "I have sinned greatly by doing this. But now I beg you to forgive me for this fault. I have been very foolish."⁹ Then Yahweh spoke to Gad, David's prophet,¹⁰ "Go and say to David, 'Yahweh says this: I offer you three things; choose one of them for me to do to you.'" ¹¹ So Gad went to David and said, "Yahweh says this, 'Take your choice: ¹² three years of famine, three months running away from the armies of your enemies, or three days of Yahweh's own sword, an epidemic in your land, with Yahweh's destroying angel bringing death throughout Israel.' Now decide how I am to answer him who sends me."¹³ David said to Gad, "This is a hard choice, but let me rather fall into the power of Yahweh, since his

mercy is very great; and not into the power of men.”

¹⁴So Yahweh sent an epidemic on Israel, and seventy thousand men of the Israelites died. ¹⁵God sent the angel to Jerusalem to destroy it, but as he was about to destroy it, Yahweh looked and changed his mind; and he said to the destroying angel, “Enough! Now withdraw your hand.” The angel of Yahweh was standing beside the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. ¹⁶David saw the angel of Yahweh standing between the heavens and earth with a naked sword in his hand, ready to destroy Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell on their faces. ¹⁷And David prayed to God, “Was it not I who sinned, by ordering this wicked census? But these, this flock, what have they done? Yahweh my God, let your hand lie heavy on me and on my family; but let your people escape the plague.”

¹⁸The angel of Yahweh then said to Gad, “David must go up and build an altar to Yahweh on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.” ¹⁹So David obeyed the command which Gad had spoken in the name of Yahweh. ²⁰Now Ornan, as he turned, had seen the angel and had hidden, with his four sons.

Ornan was threshing wheat ²¹when David came to him. When Ornan looked up and saw David coming, he left the threshing floor and with his face to the ground did homage to David. ²²Then David said to Ornan, “Sell me your threshing floor, to build an altar to Yahweh. Let me have it at its full price, that the plague may be turned away from the people.” ²³“Take it,” Ornan said to David, “and let my lord the king do as he thinks right. Look, I will give you the oxen for burnt offerings, the threshing sled for the wood and the wheat for the grain offering; I give them all.”

²⁴But King David said to Ornan, “No, I must buy it from you at the full price; I will not take for Yahweh what is yours, or offer burnt offerings that cost me nothing.” ²⁵So David gave Ornan six hundred gold coins for the threshing place.

²⁶David built an altar there to Yahweh and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. He called on Yahweh, and Yahweh answered him with fire from heaven on the altar for burnt offerings ²⁷and ordered the angel to put his sword away. ²⁸Then David saw that Yahweh had answered him on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, so he kept on offering sacrifices there. ²⁹The Holy Tent of Yahweh that Moses had made in the wilderness and the altar for burnt offerings were at that time at the High place at Gibeon, ³⁰but David had not been able to go there before God to consult him, so fearful was he of the sword of the angel of Yahweh.

22 ¹Then David said, “Here is where the Temple of Yahweh God will be; and this is where the people of Israel are to offer burnt offerings.”

Preparations for the building of the temple

²David gave orders to gather all the strangers living in the land of Israel and he set stonecutters to prepare stone blocks for building the Temple of God. ³David furthermore stored up great quantities of iron to make nails for the wooden gates and for clamps, and more bronze than could be weighed; ⁴logs of cedar too, beyond number, the Sidonians and Tyrians having brought cedar logs to David in great quantities.

⁵Then David said, “My son Solomon is young and inexperienced, and the Temple to be built for Yahweh must be of great splendor, and famous for its magnificence in every country. I will make preparations for him.” And so, before he died, David laid away large amounts of the materials needed. ⁶He then sent for his son Solomon and instructed him to build a Temple for Yahweh, the God of Israel, ⁷“My son, my heart was set on building a temple for the name of Yahweh my God. ⁸But Yahweh told me, ‘You have shed much blood and fought great battles; it is not for you to build a temple for my name, since you have shed so much blood on the earth in my presence. ⁹But now a son is born to you. He shall be a man of peace, and I will give him peace from all the enemies that surround him; for Solomon is his name, and in his days I will give Israel peace and quiet. ¹⁰He shall build a temple for my name; he shall be a son to me and I a father to him. His dynasty will rule Israel forever. ¹¹Now, my son, may Yahweh be with you and give you success in building a temple for Yahweh your God, as he has said concerning you. ¹²Yet may he give you insight and wisdom so that you may govern Israel according to his Law. ¹³Success will be yours if you carefully observe the statutes and the ordinances that Yahweh has prescribed to Moses for Israel. Be strong and stand fast, be fearless, be confident. ¹⁴Poor as I am, I have set aside for the Temple of Yahweh four thousand tons of gold, and nearly forty thousand tons of silver and more bronze and iron than can be weighed; I have stored up wood and stone too, to which you must add more. ¹⁵You will have many workmen, stonecutters, masons, carpenters, skilled artisans of every kind, ¹⁶while your supply of gold and silver, bronze and iron, will be unlimited. Set to work, then, and may Yahweh be with you!”

¹⁷David then commanded all the Israelite leaders to help his son Solomon, ¹⁸“Is not Yahweh your God with you? He has given you peace on all sides, since he has let me con-

quer all the people who lived in this land, and the land has been subdued for Yahweh and for his people. ¹⁹So now devote heart and soul to the search for Yahweh your God. Begin to build the sanctuary of Yahweh your God, so that the ark of the covenant of Yahweh and the holy things of God may be brought to the Temple that is built for the name of Yahweh.”

The work of the Levites

23 ¹When David was very old, he made his son Solomon king over Israel. ²He then gathered all the Israelite leaders together, with the priests and Levites.

³A census was taken of those Levites thirty years old or older. The total was thirty-eight thousand; ⁴twenty-four thousand of these were responsible for the services of the house of Yahweh; six thousand were scribes and judges; ⁵four thousand were keepers of the gate; four thousand praised Yahweh on the instruments David had made for that purpose.

⁶Then David divided the Levites into three groups, according to their clans: Gershon, Kohath and Merari.

⁷For the Gershonites: Ladan and Shimei. ⁸Sons of Ladan: Jehiel first, Zetham, Joel; three in all. ⁹Sons of Shimei: Shelomoth, Haziël, Haran; three in all. These are the heads of families of Ladan. ¹⁰Sons of Shimei: Jahath, Zirah, Jeush, Beriah; these were the sons of Shimei; four in all. ¹¹Jahath was the eldest, Zirah the second, then Jeush and Beriah, who had not many children and were counted as one family.

¹²Sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, Uzziel; four in all. ¹³Sons of Amram: Aaron and Moses. Aaron and his descendants were set apart to be in charge of the sacred objects forever, to burn incense in the presence of Yahweh, to serve him and to bless the people in his name forever. ¹⁴As for Moses, the man of God, his sons were included among the Levites. ¹⁵Sons of Moses: Gershon and Eliezer. ¹⁶Sons of Gershon: Shebuel, the first: ¹⁷Eliezer had sons: Rehabiah, the first. Eliezer had no other sons, but the sons of Rehabiah were very numerous.

¹⁸Sons of Izhar: Shelomith, the first. ¹⁹Sons of Hebron: Jeriah first, Amariah second, Jahaziel third, Jekameam fourth. ²⁰Sons of Uzziel: Micah first, Isshiah second.

²¹Sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. Sons of Mahli: Eleazar and Kish. ²²Eleazar died leaving no sons but only daughters; their cousins, the sons of Kish, married these. ²³Sons of Mushi: Mahli, Eder, Jeremoth; three in all.

²⁴These were the sons of Levi by their families, the heads of families, and those registered by name, individually; whoever was twenty years old or older had his duty in

the service of the Temple of Yahweh. ²⁵For David had said, “Yahweh, the God of Israel, has given peace to his people, and he dwells in Jerusalem forever. ²⁶The Levites are no longer required to carry the Holy Tent or anything used in its service.”

²⁷According to the last words of David, the Levites who had been registered were of twenty years and older. ²⁸Their duty is to assist the sons of Aaron with the service of the Temple of Yahweh, in the courts and chambers, to purify everything that is sacred; their duty is to serve the Temple of God. ²⁹They are also responsible for the loaves set out in rows, and for the flour for the grain offering, the wafers of unleavened bread, the cakes baked on the griddle or mixed, and they are to weigh and measure the Temple offerings. ³⁰They have to be present every morning to give glory and praise to Yahweh, and also in the evening, ³¹and at every burnt offering to Yahweh on the sabbath, New Moon or solemn feast, in such numbers as are prescribed. They must always be present before Yahweh. ³²In serving the Temple of Yahweh they observe the ritual of the Tent of Meeting, the ritual of the sanctuary and the ritual of their brethren, the sons of Aaron.

The classification of the Priests

24 ¹These are the groups to which the descendants of Aaron belong. Sons of Aaron: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, Ithamar. ²Nadab and Abihu died in their father's lifetime leaving no children, so Eleazar and Ithamar became priests. ³David divided them into groups with the help of Zadok, one of Eleazar's sons, and Ahimelech, one of the sons of Ithamar, and made a register of them according to their duties. ⁴The sons of Eleazar were found to have more leading men than the sons of Ithamar; accordingly, from the heads of families of the sons of Eleazar they made sixteen groups, and from those of the sons of Ithamar, eight. ⁵They divided them, both parties, by lot: there were Temple officials and spiritual leaders among the sons of Eleazar, as well as among the sons of Ithamar. ⁶One of the Levites, the scribe Shemaiah son of Nethanel, recorded them in the presence of the king, his officers, Zadok the priest, Ahimelech son of Abiathar and the heads of the priestly and levitical families. They took turns in drawing lots for each family of the sons of Eleazar and for the sons of Ithamar.

⁷The first lot fell to Jehoiarib, to Jedaiah the second, ⁸Harim the third, Seorim the fourth, ⁹Malchijah the fifth, Mijamin the sixth, ¹⁰Hakkoz the seventh, Abijah the eighth, ¹¹Jeshua the ninth, Shecaniah the tenth, ¹²Eliashib the eleventh, Jakim the twelfth, ¹³Huppah the thirteenth, Ishbaal the four-

teenth, ¹⁴Bilgah the fifteenth, Immer the sixteenth, ¹⁵Hezir the seventeenth, Happizzez the eighteenth, ¹⁶Pethahiah the nineteenth, Jehezkel the twentieth, ¹⁷Jachin the twenty-first, Gamul the twenty-second, ¹⁸Delaiah the twenty-third, Maaziah the twenty-fourth.

¹⁹These men were registered according to their various duties, to enter the Temple of Yahweh according to the regulations that Yahweh, the God of Israel, had given through Haran, their ancestor.

²⁰As regards the rest of the sons of Levi:

Sons of Amram: Shubael. Sons of Shubael: Jehdeiah. ²¹For Rehabiah, for the sons of Rehabiah: the eldest, Isshiah. ²²Izharites: Shelomoth: Jahath. ²³Sons of Hebron: Jeriah the first, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, Jekameam the fourth. ²⁴Sons of Uzziel: Micah; sons of Micah: Shamir; ²⁵the brother of Micah: Isshiah; sons of Micah: Isshiah, Zechariah. ²⁶Sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. Sons of Jaaziah: his son; ²⁷sons of Merari: for Jaaziah his son: Shoham, Zaccur, Ibri; ²⁸for Mahli: Eleazar who had no sons; ²⁹for Kish: the sons of Kish: Jerahmeel. ³⁰Sons of Mushi: Mahli, Eder, Jerimoth.

³¹These were the sons of Levi by their families. The head of each family and one of his younger brothers drew lots for their assignments, just as their relatives, the priests descended from Aaron, had done. King David, Zadok, Ahimelech, and the heads of families of the priests and of the Levites were witnesses.

The cantors

25 ¹For the liturgy, David and the senior army officers set apart the sons of Asaph, of Heman and of Jeduthun, who prophesied playing lyre and harp and cymbal, and a list was made of those with these duties to perform.

²Sons of Asaph: Zaccur, Joseph, Nathaniah, Asharelah; the sons of Asaph were under the direction of Asaph who prophesied whenever the king commanded.

³For Jeduthun: sons of Jeduthun: Gedaliah, Zeri, Jeshaiiah, Hashabiah, Mattithiah; there were six of them under the direction of their father Jeduthun who, to the sound of the lyre, sang praise and thanks to the Lord.

⁴For Heman: sons of Heman: Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shebuel, Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, Roman-tiezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, Mahazioth. ⁵All these were sons of Heman, the king's seer; these sounded the trumpet when Yahweh's word came. God gave Heman fourteen sons and three daughters; ⁶all of them sang in the Temple of Yahweh under their father's direction to the sound of cymbal, harp and lyre, for the liturgy in the house of Yahweh at the king's direction.

⁷All of these, whether of Asaph, Jeduthun or Heman, who were trained in singing to Yahweh, all of them skilled men, were altogether two hundred and eighty-eight. ⁸They drew lots to determine the assignment of duties of each of them whether they were young or old, experts or beginners. ⁹The first lot fell to the Asaphite, Joseph. The second was Gedaliah, he and his sons and brothers were twelve. ¹⁰The third was Zaccur, he and his sons and brothers were twelve. ¹¹The fourth was Izri, he and his sons and brothers were twelve. ¹²The fifth was Nathaniah, he and his sons and brothers were twelve. ¹³The sixth was Bukkiah, he and his sons and brothers were twelve. ¹⁴The seventh was Jesharelah, he and his sons and brothers were twelve. ¹⁵The eighth was Jeshaiiah, he and his sons and brothers were twelve. ¹⁶The ninth was Mattaniah, he and his sons and brothers were twelve. ¹⁷The tenth was Shimei, he and his sons and brothers were twelve. ¹⁸The eleventh was Azarel, he and his sons and brothers were twelve. ¹⁹The twelfth was Hashabiah, he and his sons and brothers were twelve. ²⁰The thirteenth was Shubael, he and his sons and brothers were twelve. ²¹The fourteenth was Mattithiah, he and his sons and brothers were twelve. ²²The fifteenth was Jeremoth, he and his sons and brothers were twelve. ²³The sixteenth was Hananiah, he and his sons and brothers were twelve. ²⁴The seventeenth was Joshbekashah, he and his sons and brothers were twelve. ²⁵The eighteenth was Hanani, he and his sons and brothers were twelve. ²⁶The nineteenth was Mallothi, he and his sons and brothers were twelve. ²⁷The twentieth was Eliathah, he and his sons and brothers were twelve. ²⁸The twenty-first was Hothir, he and his sons and brothers were twelve. ²⁹The twenty-second was Giddalti, he and his sons and brothers were twelve. ³⁰The twenty-third was Mahazioth, he and his sons and brothers were twelve. ³¹The twenty-fourth was Romantiezer, he and his sons and brothers were twelve.

The keepers of the gate

26 ¹These are the assignments of work for the Levites who served as Temple guards. For the Korahites: Meshelemiah son of Kore, one of the sons of Ebiasahp. ²Meshelemiah had sons: Zechariah the first-born, Jediel the second, Zebadiah the third, Jathniel the fourth, ³Elam the fifth, Jehohanan the sixth, Eliehoenai the seventh.

⁴Obed-edom had sons: Shemaiah the firstborn, Jehozabad the second, Joah the third, Sacar the fourth, Nethanel the fifth, ⁵Ammiel the sixth, Issachar the seventh, Peullethai the eighth; God had indeed blessed him. ⁶Shemaiah had sons who were impor-

tant men in their clan because of their great ability. ⁷Sons of Shemaiah: Othni, Rephael, Obed, Elzabad and his brothers, Elihu and Semachia, brave men. ⁸All these were sons of Obed-edom. These and their sons and brothers were highly qualified for this work. For Obed-edom, sixty-two.

⁹Meshelemiah had sons and brothers: eighteen brave men.

¹⁰Hosah, son of Merari, had sons: Shimri was the first, for although he was not the firstborn his father had made him the chief. ¹¹Hilkiah was the second, Tebaliah the third, Zechariah the fourth. Altogether thirteen members of Hosah's family were Temple guards.

¹²The Temple guards were divided into groups, according to their families, and they were assigned duties in the Temple, just as the other Levites were. ¹³They drew lots, junior and senior family alike, to see which gate it would be responsible for. ¹⁴For the east side the lot fell to Shelemiah, whose son Zechariah was a shrewd counselor; when they drew lots, the lot for the north side fell to the latter. ¹⁵To Obed-edom went the south, and to his sons the storehouse. ¹⁶To Shuppim and Hosah went the west with the Gate of the Felled Tree-trunk on the upper road. Watches were established for each family. ¹⁷On the east, six daily; on the north, four daily; on the south, four daily; at the storehouse, two each side; ¹⁸for the Parbar. ¹⁹These were the orders of the gatekeepers among the Korahites and Merarites.

²⁰Others of their fellow Levites were in charge of the Temple Treasury and the store-rooms for gifts dedicated to God.

²¹The sons of Ladan, sons of Gershon, through Ladan had the Jehielites for heads of the families of Ladan the Gershonite. ²²The Jehielites, Zetham and Joel his brother, were responsible for the treasuries of the Temple of Yahweh.

²³As regard the Amramites, Izharites, Hebronites, and Uzzielites;

²⁴Shebuel son of Gershom, son of Moses, was the officer responsible for the treasuries. ²⁵His kinsmen through Eliezer: Rehabiah his son, Jeshaiah his son, Joram his son, Zichri his son, Shelomoth his son. ²⁶This Shelomoth and his kinsmen were in charge of all the gifts dedicated to Yahweh by King David and by the heads of families as officers of thousands, of hundreds, or as other senior officers. ²⁷There was a part of the loot they captured in battle and dedicated for use in the Temple ²⁸and also the things that Samuel, the seer, and Saul son of Kish, Abner son of Ner, and Joab son of Zeruah had dedicated. All that had been dedicated was under the responsibility of Shelomoth and his kinsmen.

²⁹For the Izharites: Chananiah and his

sons were in charge of Israel's civil affairs as officials and judges.

³⁰For the Hebronites: Hashabiah and his kinsmen, one thousand seven hundred fighting men, were appointed as overseers of all Israel west of Jordan, for all the service of Yahweh and the service of the king. ³¹For the Hebronites: Jerijah the chief. In the fortieth year of David's reign, the family line of the Hebronite families was investigated and fighting men were found belonging to them at Jazer in Gilead. ³²King David appointed two thousand seven hundred fighting men, kinsmen to Jerijah and heads of families, as overseers of the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh for all the service of Yahweh and the sacrifices of the king.

Military and civil organization

27 ¹Census of the sons of Israel; The heads of families, the commanders of thousands and hundreds, and other officers who served the king in all that referred to the divisions of twenty-four thousand men each, that were on duty for a month, each month of the year. ²For the first month Jashobeam, son of Zabdiel, ³son of Perez, and chief of all the officers of the division had charge of a division of twenty-four thousand men. ⁴For the second month Dodai, the Ahohite had charge of a division of twenty-four thousand men. ⁵For the third month Benaiah son of Jehoiada, the chief priest, had charge of a division of twenty-four thousand men. ⁶Benaiah who was champion of The Thirty, was overseer for The Thirty and for his division. Ammizabad was his son. ⁷For the fourth month was Asahel, the brother of Joab; his son Zebadiah succeeded him. He had charge of a division of twenty-four thousand men. ⁸For the fifth month, Shamhuth the Izrahite had charge of a division of twenty-four thousand men. ⁹For the sixth month, Ira son of Ikkesh of Tekoa had charge of a division of twenty-four thousand men. ¹⁰For the seventh month, Helez the Pelonite, an Ephraimite, had charge of a division of twenty-four thousand men. ¹¹For the eighth month, Sibbecai of Hushah, a Zerahite, had charge of a division of twenty-four thousand men. ¹²For the ninth month, Abiezer of Anathoth, a Benjaminite, had charge of a division of twenty-four thousand men. ¹³For the tenth month, Maharai of Netophah, a Zerahite, had charge of a division of twenty-four thousand men. ¹⁴For the eleventh month, Benaiah of Pirathon, an Ephraimite, had charge of a division of twenty-four thousand men. ¹⁵For the twelfth month, Heldai from Netophah, of Othniel, had charge of a division of twenty-four thousand men. ¹⁶Overseers for the tribes of Israel: Eliezer son of Zichri was chief officer for the Reubenites, Shephatiah, son of

Maacha for the Simeonites, ¹⁷Hashabiah, son of Kemuel for the Levites, Zadok for the Aaronites, ¹⁸Elihu, one of David's brothers, for the Judaeans, Omri son of Michael for the Issacharites, ¹⁹Ishmaiah, son of Obadiah for the Zebulunites, Jeremoth, son of Azriel for the Naphtalite, ²⁰Hoshea, son of Azariah for the Ephraimites, Joel, son of Pedaiah for the half tribe of Manasseh, ²¹Iddo, son of Zechariah for the half tribe of Manasseh in Gad, Jaasiel, son of Abner for the Benjaminites, ²²Azarel, son of Jeroham for the Danites. These were the officials for the tribes of Israel.

²³David took no census of those who were twenty years old and under, since Yahweh had promised to make Israel as numerous as the stars of heaven. ²⁴Joab, son of Zeruiah began a census, but he did not finish it for God punished Israel because of this census. The final figures were never recorded in the official records of King David.

²⁵This is the list of those who administered the king's property. Overseers for the king's storerooms: Azmaveth son of Adiel. Commissioner for the stores in provincial towns, villages, castles: Jonathan son of Uziah. ²⁶For the agricultural workers employed on the land: Ezri son of Chelub. ²⁷For the vineyards: Shimei of Ramah. For those in the vineyards who looked after the wine cellars: Zabdi of Shepham. ²⁸For the olives and sycamores in the lowlands: Baal-hanan of Geder. For the stores of oil: Joash. ²⁹For cattle in pasture at Sharon: Shitrai of Sharon. For cattle in the valleys: Shaphat son of Adlai. ³⁰For camels: Obil, the Ishmaelite. For donkeys: Jehdeiah of Meranoth. ³¹For flocks: Jaziz, the Hagrite. All these were overseers for King David's property.

³²Jonathan, David's uncle, was a skillful adviser and a scholar. Jehiel son of Hachmoni attended the king's sons. ³³Ahithophel was the king's counselor. Hushai the Archite was Friend of the King. ³⁴Jehoiada, son of Benaiah, and Abiathar succeeded Ahithophel. Joab was commander of the king's armies.

David's instructions for the temple

28 ¹David held a meeting in Jerusalem of all the officials of Israel, the overseers for the tribes, and the officials in the royal service, the commanders of thousands, the commanders of hundreds, the overseers for all the property and livestock of the king and his sons, together with the palace officials, leading soldiers, and important men. ²Then King David got up and said:

"My brothers and my people, listen to me. I had set my heart on building a settled home for the ark of the covenant of Yahweh, as a footstool for our God. I have made prepara-

tions for building, ³but God has said to me, 'You are not to build a temple for my name, for you have been a man of war and have shed blood.'

⁴Yahweh, the God of Israel, chose me and my descendants to rule Israel forever. He chose Judah for leader, my family within the tribe of Judah, and of my father's sons, myself. He was pleased to make me king of all Israel. ⁵Of all my sons – he has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of Yahweh over Israel. ⁶He said to me, 'Solomon your son is the man to build my Temple and my courts, for I have chosen him to be a son to me and I will be a father to him. ⁷I will make his kingdom last forever if he continues to obey carefully all my laws and commands as he does now.'

⁸So now in the sight of all Israel and of the assembly of Yahweh, and in the hearing of our God, I tell you to observe and meditate on all the commandments of Yahweh your God, so that you may possess this prosperous land and leave it to your children after you as an inheritance forever.

⁹And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father, serve him with an undivided heart and a willing mind; for Yahweh knows all our thoughts and desires. If you seek him, he will let you find him; but if you turn away from him, he will abandon you forever. ¹⁰Realize at this moment that Yahweh has chosen you to build a house for him as sanctuary. Be strong and set to work."

¹¹David gave his son Solomon the plans for the vestibule, the buildings, the treasuries, the upper rooms, the inner apartments and the room where the mercy Seat would be. ¹²He also gave him a description of all he had in mind for the courts of Yahweh's House, all the surrounding apartments, the treasuries of Yahweh's House and the treasuries of votive offerings; ¹³also of the orders of priests and Levites, the liturgical duties in Yahweh's House. ¹⁴He instructed him about how much silver and gold was to be used for making the utensils, ¹⁵the bullion for the golden lampstands and their lamps, the gold bullion for the silver lampstand, for the lampstand and its lamps according to the requirements for each lampstand, ¹⁶gold bullion for the tables on which the rows of bread were set, for each of these tables, the silver for the silver tables, ¹⁷the forks, the sprinkling bowls, basins of pure gold, the gold bullion for the bowls, for each of the bowls, ¹⁸the bullion of refined gold for the altar of incense. He gave him the plans for the chariot, for the golden cherubim with wings outspread covering the ark of the covenant of Yahweh – ¹⁹all this in accordance with the plan drawn according to the instructions which Yahweh himself gave him to carry out.

²⁰Then David said to his son Solomon, “Be strong, stand firm; be fearless, be determined and set to work, because Yahweh God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or abandon you before you have finished all the work to be done for the House of Yahweh. ²¹Here are the orders of priests and Levites for all the duties of the House of God; every willing man of any aptitude will help you in all this work; the officials and all the people are entirely at your command.”

29 ¹Then King David said to the whole assembly, “Solomon my son, whom Yahweh has chosen, is still young and the work is great; this palace is not for people but for Yahweh God. ²With all my means, I have provided for the house of my God, adding gold to gold, silver to silver, bronze to bronze, iron to iron, wood to wood, onyx, inlaid stones, colored and striped stones, precious stones of every kind, masses of alabaster. ³What is more, the gold and silver that I have in my own treasury I give out of love for the house of God, above what I have provided already for the Holy House – ⁴115 tons of the finest gold, gold of Ophir, 265 tons of pure silver for plating the walls of the buildings. ⁵Whatever gold you have, whatever silver, or workmanship of the craftsman’s hand, will each of you offer it to Yahweh today?”

⁶Then the heads of families, the officials for the tribes of Israel, the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, and those who managed the king’s affairs, ⁷gave for the service of the house of God 190 tons of gold, 380 tons of silver, 675 tons of bronze, and 3,750 tons of iron. ⁸Those who had precious stones brought them to Jehiel, the Gershonite for the treasury of Yahweh’s House. ⁹The people rejoiced at what had been given so readily, since their gifts to Yahweh had been made wholeheartedly. King David too was filled with joy. ¹⁰In sight of the whole assembly David blessed Yahweh and said:

“May you be blessed, Yahweh God of Israel our ancestor, forever and ever! ¹¹Yours, Yahweh, is the greatness, the power, splendor, length of days, glory, for all that is in the heavens and on the earth is yours. Yours is the sovereignty forever, O Yahweh; you are supreme ruler over all. ¹²Riches and honor go before you, you are ruler of all, in your hand lie strength and power; You are the one who gives greatness and strength to all.

¹³At this time, our God, we give you thanks, we praise the splendor of your name. ¹⁴For who am I and what is my people to have received all that we give you back now? All

comes from you; what we have received from your own hand we have given to you. ¹⁵For we are strangers before you, settlers only, as all our ancestors were; our days on earth pass like a shadow, and there is no hope beyond.

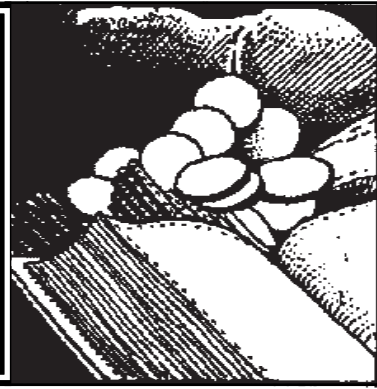
¹⁶Yahweh, our God, all this wealth that we have brought together to build a house for your holy Name, comes from your hand, all is yours. ¹⁷O my God, I know that you examine the heart and delight in honesty, and in honesty of heart I have willingly given all this; and now with joy I have seen your people here offer their gifts willingly. ¹⁸O Yahweh, God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, keep such thoughts in the hearts and minds of your people forever, and direct their hearts toward you. ¹⁹Give Solomon my son a heart determined to keep your commandments, your decrees, your statutes; may he practice them all, and build this palace I have prepared for you.”

²⁰Then David said to the whole assembly, “Bless now Yahweh your God!” And the whole assembly blessed Yahweh, the God of their ancestors, and went on their knees to give honor to Yahweh and to the king. ²¹The following day, the Israelites offered sacrifices and burnt offerings to Yahweh: a thousand bulls, a thousand rams, a thousand lambs with their wine offerings, as well as many sacrifices for the whole of Israel. ²²They ate and drank that day in Yahweh’s presence with great joy. Then they made Solomon, son of David, their second king and anointed him to rule over them in the name of Yahweh, and anointed Zadok as priest. ²³Solomon sat on the throne of Yahweh, in place of David his father. He prospered, and all Israel obeyed him. ²⁴All the officials, all the champions, and even all the sons of King David, swore fidelity to King Solomon. ²⁵Yahweh exalted Solomon greatly in the eyes of all Israel, and gave him a glorious reign such as had not been enjoyed by any king over Israel before him.

²⁶David son of Jesse had reigned over the whole of Israel. ²⁷His reign over Israel had lasted forty years; he had reigned in Hebron for seven years, and in Jerusalem for thirty-three. ²⁸He died at a good old age, with his fill of days, of riches, of honor. Then his son Solomon succeeded him. ²⁹The history of King David, from first to last, can be found in the records of Samuel, the prophet, the records of Nathan the prophet, and the records of Gad, the prophet. ³⁰These records tell how he ruled, how powerful he was, and all the things that happened to him, to Israel, and to the surrounding kingdoms.

CHRONICLES

2



Solomon's gift of wisdom

1 ¹Solomon, son of David, took firm control of the Kingdom of Israel. Yahweh, his God, was with him and exalted him greatly. ²Solomon then spoke to all Israel, to commanders of thousands and of hundreds, to the judges, and to all the princes of Israel, the heads of families. ³Then Solomon, and with him the whole assembly, went to the High place at Gibeon, where God's Tent of Meeting was, which Moses, the servant of God, had made in the wilderness; ⁴David, however, had brought the ark of God from Kiriath-jearim to the place he had prepared for it, having set up a tent for it in Jerusalem. ⁵The bronze altar that Bezalel, son of Uri, son of Hur, had made stood there in front of the Holy Tent of Yahweh; Solomon, with the assembly, came to this altar, looking for Yahweh's presence. ⁶Solomon went up to the bronze altar that was by the Tent of Meeting, and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it.

⁷That night, God appeared to Solomon and said, "Ask what you would like me to give you."⁸Solomon replied to God, "You showed great kindness to David my father; and you have made me king in his place. ⁹Yahweh God, the promise you made to David my father has now been fulfilled, since you have made me king over a people who are so many that they cannot be counted. ¹⁰Therefore now give me wisdom and knowledge to act as leader of this people, for who could govern a people so great as yours?"

¹¹God said to Solomon, "Since that is what you want, you have asked, not for riches, treasure, honor, the lives of your enemies, or even for a long life, but for wisdom and knowledge to govern my people of whom I have made you king; ¹²therefore wisdom and knowledge are granted you. I give you riches too, and treasures, and honor such as none of the kings had that were before you, nor shall any have that come after you."

¹³Solomon left the High place and the Tent of Meeting at Gibeon and returned to Jerusalem. ¹⁴Solomon built up a force of chariots

and horses; he had one thousand four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses; these he stationed in the chariot towns and with the king in Jerusalem. ¹⁵During his reign, silver and gold became as common in Jerusalem as stone, while cedar wood was as plentiful as the ordinary sycamore trees in the foothills of Judah. ¹⁶Solomon's horses were imported from Cilicia; the king's agents took delivery of them from Cilicia at a fixed rate. ¹⁷They imported chariots from Egypt for 600 pieces of silver each, and horses for 150 each. These men acted in the same way for all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Aram. ¹⁸Solomon decided to build a house for Yahweh's Name and a palace for himself.

Solomon and Hiram

2 ¹He put 70,000 men to work transporting materials, 80,000 to quarry in the hill country, and 3,600 supervisors in charge of them. ²Solomon then sent this message to Hiram king of Tyre, "Deal with me as you dealt with my father David when you sent him cedars to build a house to live in. ³I am now building a house to honor Yahweh, my God, to acknowledge his holiness by burning incense of scented spices in his presence, by the loaves that are perpetually set out, by offerings morning and evening, on the sabbath, New Moon, and the solemn festivals of Yahweh our God – and this forever in Israel. ⁴The house I am building will be large, for our God is greater than all gods. ⁵Yet no one can really build a temple for God since heaven, even highest heaven, cannot contain him. And I cannot build him a house for anything more than to burn incense in his presence. ⁶So send me a man skilled in working with gold, silver, bronze, iron, scarlet, crimson, violet, and the art of engraving too; he is to work with the skilled men whom my father David provided here in Judah and Jerusalem. ⁷From Lebanon send me cedar wood, juniper and alummim, since I know your servants are experts in felling the trees of Lebanon. My servants will work with yours.

⁸They will prepare wood in bulk for me, since the house I wish to build is to be of astounding size. ⁹For the woodmen who are to fell the trees I assign twenty thousand kors of grain, twenty thousand kors of barley, twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil – this is for the maintenance of your servants.”

¹⁰In a letter sent to King Solomon, Hiram king of Tyre replied, “Because Yahweh loves his people he has made you king. ¹¹Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Israel, who has made the heavens and the earth, and given King David a wise son, full of understanding and skill, who is going to build a house for Yahweh and a palace for himself and his court. ¹²And I am also sending you a skilled craftsman, Hiram-abi, ¹³the son of a Danite woman by a Tyrian father. He is skilled in the use of gold, silver, bronze, iron, stone, wood, scarlet, violet, fine linen, crimson, in engraving of all kinds, and in the execution of any design suggested to him. Let him be put to work with your craftsmen and those of my lord David, your father. ¹⁴So now let my lord send his servants the wheat, barley, oil and wine, as already suggested.

¹⁵For our part, we will cut down all the cedar trees you need from Lebanon, and bring them to you in rafts by sea to Joppa, and you will transport them to Jerusalem.”

¹⁶Solomon took a count of all the foreigners living in the land of Israel, following the census that David his father had taken; it was found there were a hundred and fifty-three thousand six hundred. ¹⁷He assigned seventy thousand of these for carrying loads, eighty thousand as stonecutters in the hill country, and three thousand six hundred as overseers to make sure the people worked.

The building of Yahweh's house

3 ¹Solomon then began to build Yahweh's House in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah where David his father had a vision. It was the place prepared by David, the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. ²Solomon began building in the second month of the fourth year of his reign, on the second day. ³The house which Solomon built was 90 feet long and 30 feet high. ⁴The Hall in front of the Great Room of the Temple was 30 cubits long across the width of the house, and its height was 180 feet. He plated it on the inside with pure gold. ⁵The Great Room he faced with juniper which he plated with pure gold, and on it set palms and festoons. ⁶He adorned the building with precious stones of great beauty; the gold was gold from Parvaim, ⁷and with this he faced the house, the beams, thresholds, walls and doors; on the walls he carved cherubs.

⁸He then built the Holy of Holies; its length,

across the width of the Great Room, was 30 feet, and its width 30 feet. He plated it with 25 tons of fine gold; ⁹the gold nails weighed 20 ounces. He also plated the upper rooms with gold. ¹⁰In the Holy of Holies he made two cherubs of wrought metal work and plated them with gold. ¹¹The total span of the cherubs' wings was 30 feet, each being 7 1/2 feet long, with one wing touching the wall of the room, while the other touched that of the other cherub. ¹²One wing of a cherub, 7 1/2 feet long, touched the wall of the apartment; the second, 7 1/2 feet long, touched the wing of the other cherub. ¹³The spread of these cherubs' wings was 30 feet. They stood on their feet, facing the Hall.

¹⁴He made the Veil of violet, scarlet, crimson and fine linen; he worked cherubs on it.

¹⁵In front of the Great room he made two pillars 52 feet high, and on the top of each a capital measuring 7 feet. ¹⁶He set festoons like in the Holy of holies, at the tops of the pillars, and a hundred pomegranates which he placed on the festoons. ¹⁷He set up the pillars in front of the house, one on the right, the other on the left; the one on the right he called Jachin, the one on the left Boaz.

4 ¹He made an altar of bronze, 30 feet long, 30 feet wide and ten high. ²He made the Sea of cast metal, 15 feet from rim to rim, circular in shape and 7 feet high; a cord 44 feet long gave the measurement of its girth. ³Under it and completely encircling it were pomegranates; they went around the Sea over a length of 44 feet; the pomegranates were in two rows, of one and the same casting with the rest. ⁴It rested on twelve oxen, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south, three facing east; on these, their hind-quarters all turned inward, stood the Sea. ⁵It was a hand's breadth in thickness, and its rim was shaped like the rim of a cup, like a flower. It could hold 15,000 gallons of water.

⁶He made ten basins, arranging five on the right side, five on the left, for washing the victim for the burnt offering which was purified there; but the Sea was for the priests to wash in. ⁷He made the ten golden lampstands in the way prescribed and placed them in the Great room, five on the right and five on the left. ⁸He made a hundred golden sprinkling bowls.

⁹He made the court of the priests and the great court with its gates and plated the gates with bronze. ¹⁰He placed the Sea some distance from the right-hand side, to the south-east.

¹¹Hiram also made the pots, the shovels and the bowls.

Thus he completed the work he had to do for King Solomon in the house of God: ¹²the two pillars; the two moldings of the capitals

surmounting the pillars; the two sets of filigree to cover the two moldings of the capitals surmounting the pillars; ¹³the four hundred pomegranates for the two sets of filigree, with the pomegranates of each filigree in two rows; ¹⁴the ten stands and the ten basins on the stands; ¹⁵the Sea and the twelve oxen beneath it; ¹⁶the pots, the shovels, the forks, and all their accessories made by Hiram-abi of burnished bronze for King Solomon, for Yahweh's House. ¹⁷The king made them by the process of sand casting, near the Jordan between Succoth and Zeredah. ¹⁸Solomon made all these articles in such quantities, that the weight of bronze could not be reckoned.

¹⁹Solomon placed all the furnishings he had made in the house of God: the golden altar and the tables for the loaves of offering; ²⁰the lampstands of pure gold with their lamps to burn, as prescribed, before the sanctuary, of pure gold; ²¹the floral work, the lamps, the extinguishers, of gold (and it was pure gold); ²²the knives, the sprinkling bowls, incense boats, of fine gold; the door of the Temple, the inner doors (for the Holy of Holies) and the Temple doors (for the Hekal), of gold.

The ark is brought to the temple

5 ¹So all the work that Solomon did for Yahweh's House was completed, and Solomon brought the dedicated offerings of his father David, the silver and the gold and the vessels, and put them in the Temple storerooms.

²Then Solomon called the leaders of the tribes and clans of Israel together in Jerusalem to bring the ark of the covenant of Yahweh up from the City of David, which is Zion. ³All the men of Israel assembled around the king in the seventh month, at the time of the feast. ⁴All the leaders of Israel came, and the Levites took up the ark ⁵and the Tent of Meeting with all the sacred vessels that were in it; the levitical priests carried them.

⁶King Solomon, and all the community of Israel gathered with him in front of the ark, sacrificed sheep and oxen, countless, innumerable. ⁷The priests brought the ark of the covenant of Yahweh to its place, in the place, in the sanctuary of the house, that is, in the Holy of Holies, under the cherubs' wings. ⁸For there where the ark was placed the cherubs spread out their wings and sheltered the ark and its poles. ⁹The poles of the ark were long enough for their ends to be seen from the Holy Place in front of the sanctuary, but not from outside; ¹⁰they are still there today. There was nothing in the ark except the two stone slabs that Moses had placed in it at Horeb, where Yahweh had made a covenant with the Israelites when they came out of Egypt.

¹¹Finally, the priests came out of the sanctuary. All the priests were present, for they had purified themselves whatever group they belonged to. ¹²All the Levite musicians, Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun with their sons and brothers, were stationed to the east of the altar, robed in fine linen and playing cymbals, harps, and lyres. A hundred and twenty priests accompanied them on the trumpet. ¹³All those who played the trumpet, or who sang, united in giving praise and glory to Yahweh. Lifting their voices to the sound of the trumpet and cymbal and instruments of music, they gave praise to Yahweh. "For he is good, for his love is everlasting." Just then a cloud filled the sanctuary, the building of Yahweh.

¹⁴Because of the cloud the priests could no longer perform their duties: for the Glory of Yahweh filled the house of God.

6 ¹Then Solomon said: "Yahweh has chosen to live in the thick cloud. Yes, I have built you a majestic temple, ²a place for you to live in forever."

³Then the king turned and asked God's blessing on the whole assembly of Israel, who were standing there. ⁴He said, "Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Israel, who has spoken through the mouth of David, my father and has now carried out by his hand what he said: ⁵From the day I brought my people out of Egypt until now I did not choose any city in the land of Israel as the place to build a house where my Name would be, and I did not choose anyone to be prince of my people Israel. ⁶But now I have chosen Jerusalem as the place where my Name will be, and you, David, to rule my people.' ⁷My father David had set his heart on building a house for the Name of Yahweh, the God of Israel, ⁸but Yahweh said to him, 'You have set your heart on building a temple for my name, and in this you have done well; ⁹and yet, you are not the man to build the house; your son, born of your own body, shall build me a house.' ¹⁰Yahweh has kept the promise he made: I have succeeded David my father and am seated on the throne of Israel, as Yahweh promised; and now I have built a house for the Name of Yahweh, the God of Israel, ¹¹and have placed in it the ark containing the covenant that Yahweh made with the people of Israel."

Solomon's prayer

¹²Then in the presence of the whole assembly of Israel Solomon stood before the altar of Yahweh and stretched out his hands. ¹³Solomon had made a bronze pedestal and had placed it in the middle of the court; it was 7 feet long, 7 feet wide and 7 feet high. Solomon mounted it, and knelt down on it in the presence of the whole assembly of Israel;

he stretched out his hands to heaven. ¹⁴ and said, “Yahweh, God of Israel, not in heaven nor on earth is there such a God as you; you are true to your covenant and show graciousness toward your servants when they live in wholehearted obedience to you. ¹⁵ You have kept the promise you made to your servant David my father; what you promised with your mouth, today you have carried out by your hand. ¹⁶ And now, Yahweh, God of Israel, keep the promise you made your servant David when you said, ‘You shall always have someone from your line to rule as king of Israel, if only your sons are careful how they behave, following my Law as you yourself have done.’

¹⁷ So now, God of Israel, let the words come true which you spoke to your servant David my father. ¹⁸ Yet will God really live with men and women on the earth? Why, the heavens and their own heavens cannot contain you! How much less this house that I have built! ¹⁹ Listen to the prayer and grant the requests of your servant, Yahweh my God; listen to the cry and to the prayer your servant makes to you. ²⁰ Day and night let your eyes watch over this house, where you have promised that your Name would be.

²¹ Hear the prayers of your servant and of Israel your people as they pray in this place. From heaven where your dwelling is, hear; and, as you hear, forgive.

²² If anyone sins against his neighbor, and the neighbor calls down a curse on him and makes him swear an oath before your altar in this house, ²³ hear from heaven, and act; decide between your servants: punish the wicked one, bringing his conduct down on his own head; and vindicate the innocent, rewarding him as his innocence deserves.

²⁴ If Israel your people are defeated by the enemy because they have sinned against you, but they return to you and praise your name and humbly pray to you for forgiveness, in this house, ²⁵ hear from heaven. Forgive the sin of your people Israel, and bring them back to the land you gave to them and to their ancestors.

²⁶ When the heavens are shut and there is no rain because they have sinned against you, if they pray in this place and praise your name, having been humbled by you, and repent of their sin, ²⁷ hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your servant and of your people Israel. Teach them to do what is right; and send rain on your land which you have given your people as an inheritance.

²⁸ Should there be famine in the land or epidemic or the crops are destroyed by scorching winds or swarms of locusts, should this people’s enemies lay siege to one of their cities, if there is any plague or sickness, ²⁹ if any person, or all Israel your people, should,

out of heartfelt sorrow, pray, stretching out his hands toward this house, ³⁰ hear from heaven where your home is. Forgive, and deal with each as his conduct deserves, for you know each heart – you alone know the hearts of all humankind – ³¹ that they may come to you and follow your ways as long as they live in the land you gave to our ancestors.

³² And the foreigner too, not belonging to your people Israel, if he comes from a distant country for the sake of your Name and of your mighty hand and outstretched arm, if he comes and prays in this house, ³³ hear from heaven where your home is, and grant all the foreigner asks, so that all the peoples of the earth may come to know your name and, like your people Israel, revere you, and know that your Name dwells in this house I have built.

³⁴ If your people go out to war against their enemies whatever way you send them, and if they turn toward the city you have chosen and toward the house I have built for your Name and pray to you, ³⁵ hear from heaven their prayer and give them victory.

³⁶ If they sin against you – for there is no one who does not sin – and you are angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and they are led away captive to a land far or near, ³⁷ if in the land of their exile they come to themselves and repent, and in the country of their captivity they pray to you saying, ‘We have sinned, we confess how sinful and wicked we have been,’ ³⁸ and if they turn again to you with all their heart and soul in the country of their captivity to which they have been deported, and pray, turning toward the land you gave their ancestors, toward the city you have chosen, and toward the house I have built for your name, ³⁹ hear from heaven where your home is. Hear their prayer, be merciful to them, and forgive your people the sins they have committed against you.

⁴⁰ Now, O my God, may your eyes be open and your ears attentive to the prayer offered in this place. ⁴¹ And now rise Yahweh God, come to your resting place, you and the ark of your power. Let your priests, Yahweh God, be blessed in all they do, and your faithful people rejoice in prosperity.

⁴² Yahweh God, do not reject the face of your anointed king and remember David your servant.”

Dedication of Yahweh’s house

7 ¹ When Solomon had finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and burned up the sacrifices that had been offered; and the Glory of Yahweh filled the Temple. ² The priests could not enter the temple of Yahweh’s House because the glory of Yahweh filled his house. ³ All the people of Israel, seeing the fire come down and the

Glory of God resting on the house, bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the earth; they worshiped and gave praise to Yahweh, “for he is good, for his love is everlasting.”⁴ Then the king and all the people offered sacrifice before Yahweh.⁵ King Solomon offered twenty-two thousand oxen and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep in sacrifice; and so the king and all the people dedicated Yahweh’s House.⁶ The priests stood in their places, and also the Levites who gave praise to Yahweh on the instruments that David had made to accompany the canticles of Yahweh, “for his love is everlasting.” They played and sang the hymns of praise that David had composed. By their side were the priests sounding the trumpet, while all Israel stood.

⁷Solomon consecrated the inside part of the court that is in front of Yahweh’s House; he offered the burnt offering there and the fatty parts of the peace offerings since the bronze altar Solomon had made could not hold the burnt offering, the grain offering and the fatty part.⁸ Solomon then celebrated the feast for seven days. Enormous crowds of Israelites gathered together with him from the Pass of Hamath to the border of Egypt.⁹ On the eighth day they held a closing celebration, for they had been seven days celebrating the dedication of the altar.¹⁰ On the twenty-third day of the seventh month Solomon dismissed the people who returned to their homes, rejoicing and with happy hearts for the goodness Yahweh had shown to David, to Solomon and to his people Israel.

¹¹Solomon finished Yahweh’s House and the royal palace and successfully concluded all he had set himself to do in both of them.¹² Then Yahweh appeared to Solomon in the night and said, “I have heard your prayer. I choose this house to be the place where sacrifices are to be offered to me.¹³ When I close the skies and there is no rain, when I command the locust to devour the land, when I send an epidemic among my people,¹⁴ and my people who bear my name humble themselves, and pray and look for me, and turn from their wicked ways then I myself will hear from heaven and forgive their sins and restore their land.¹⁵ From now on, my eyes are open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is offered in this place.¹⁶ From now on, I have chosen and consecrated this house as the place where my name will be forever; my eyes and my heart will be there forever.

¹⁷For your part, if you serve me faithfully as David your father did, if you do all that I order you and keep my statutes and my ordinances,¹⁸ I will make your royal throne secure, according to the promise I made to David your father when I said: Israel will always be ruled by one of your descendants.

¹⁹But if you turn away from me and forsake the commandments and statutes I have set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them,²⁰ then I will cast the Israelites out from the land I have given them, and I will reject this house that I have consecrated as the place where my Name would be, so that it may be an example for all the nations.²¹ All those who pass by this place which is now so exalted, will be astounded; they will whistle and say, ‘Why has Yahweh treated this country and this Temple like this?’²² And the answer will be, ‘Because they abandoned Yahweh, the God of their ancestors, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and they adopted other gods, which they worshiped and served; that is why he has brought all these disasters on them.’”

Solomon’s works

8¹ Solomon spent twenty years in building Yahweh’s House and his own palace.² Then he rebuilt the towns that Hiram had given him and settled Israelites in them.³ He went against Hamath of Zobah and conquered it:⁴ he built Tadmor in the wilderness and all the storing towns which he built in Hamath.⁵ He rebuilt Upper Beth-horon and Lower Beth-horon, fortified towns with walls and gates and bars,⁶ also Baalath and all the storing towns owned by Solomon, all the towns for his chariots and horses, and all it pleased Solomon to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon and in all the countries subject to him.⁷ Solomon employed for forced labor all those who remained of the Hittite, Amorite, Perizzite, Hivite and Jebusite peoples, that is the non-Israelites⁸ whose descendants were left in the country and had not been killed by the Israelites. Their descendants continue to be slaves down to the present time.⁹ Upon the Israelites, however, Solomon did not impose slave labor; these served as fighting men; they were officers of his chariots and commanders of horsemen.

¹⁰Solomon appointed two hundred and fifty overseers to make all these people work.

¹¹Solomon brought Pharaoh’s daughter from the City of David up to the house he had built for her. For he said, “I can’t let a woman live in the palace of David king of Israel; these are holy places where the ark of Yahweh has been.”

¹²Solomon then offered burnt offerings to Yahweh on Yahweh’s altar which he had built in front of the porch.¹³ Observing the daily rule for burnt offerings according to the requirements of Moses for sabbaths, New Moon and the three annual feasts: the feast of Unleavened Bread, the feast of Weeks and the feast of Tabernacles.¹⁴ He established the priestly orders in their duties according to the regulations of his father David. He also en-

forced the rules affecting the Levites who offered praise and served with the priests according to the daily ritual, and the different orders of gatekeepers at each gate, for such had been the commandments of David, the man of God. ¹⁵They did not change anything of the royal ordinances applying to the priests and the Levites, not even in the matter of treasurership. ¹⁶In this way all of Solomon's work was completed from the day when the foundations of Yahweh's House were laid, until the end – and so... Yahweh's House was finished.

¹⁷Then Solomon went as far as Ezion-geber and Elath on the shores of the sea, in the land of Edom. ¹⁸Huram sent him ships manned by his own men, who were experienced sailors. These men went with Solomon's men to Ophir and from there they brought back almost sixteen tons of gold, which they delivered to King Solomon.

The Queen of Sheba

9 ¹The fame of Solomon having reached the queen of Sheba, she came to Jerusalem to test him with difficult questions. She came with immense riches, camels loaded with spices, great quantities of gold and precious stones. On coming to Solomon, she asked him all the questions that she had in mind, ²and Solomon had an answer for all her questions, not one was too difficult for him to explain. ³When the queen of Sheba saw the wisdom of Solomon, the palace he had built, ⁴the food at his table, the accommodations for his officials, the organization of his staff and the way they were dressed, his cupbearers and the burnt offerings he offered in the Temple of Yahweh, it left her breathless; ⁵and she said to the king, "What I heard in my own country about you and your wisdom was true, then! ⁶I could not believe what they told me was not even half of your wisdom for the reality surpasses what I heard. ⁷How happy your wives are! How happy these servants of yours who wait on you always and hear your wisdom! ⁸Blessed be Yahweh your God who loves you and made you king to rule in his name. Because your God loves Israel and wants to preserve them forever, he has made you their king to administer law and justice."

⁹And the queen of Sheba gave King Solomon almost five tons of gold and great quantities of spices and precious stones. There never were spices like those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. ¹⁰Similarly the servants of Hiram and the servants of Solomon, who carried gold from Ophir, brought alummim wood and precious stones. ¹¹Of the alummim wood the king made floorboards for Yahweh's House and for the royal palace, and lyres and harps for

the musicians; nothing like them had ever been seen before in the land of Judah. ¹²And King Solomon, in his turn, gave the queen of Sheba everything she expressed any wish for, besides returning what she had brought to the king. Then she went home, she and her servants, to her own country.

¹³The weight of gold coming to Solomon in one year was over twenty-five tons, ¹⁴not counting the taxes paid by the traders and merchants; all the kings of Arabia and the governors of the country also brought gold and silver to Solomon. ¹⁵King Solomon made two hundred great shields of beaten gold, and plated each shield with about fifteen pounds of gold, ¹⁶and also three hundred small shields of beaten gold, and plated each of these with about eight pounds of gold; and he put them in the Hall of the Forest of Lebanon. ¹⁷The king also made a great ivory throne and plated it with purest gold. ¹⁸The throne had six steps, with a platform behind and arms at either side of the seat; two lions stood beside the arms, ¹⁹and twelve lions stood on either side of the six steps. No throne like this was ever made in any other kingdom.

²⁰All King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the furnishings in the Hall of the Forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; silver was not considered valuable in the time of Solomon. ²¹And the king also had ships that went to Tarshish with Hiram's men, and once every three years the ships of Tarshish would come back bringing gold and silver, ivory, apes and baboons. ²²King Solomon was richer and wiser than any other king in the world. ²³All the kings of the earth consulted Solomon to hear the wisdom God had given him, ²⁴and each would bring his own present: gold vessels, silver vessels, robes, armor, spices, horses and mules; and this went on year after year.

²⁵Solomon had four thousand stalls for his horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horses; these were stationed in the chariot towns and near the king in Jerusalem. ²⁶Solomon extended his power over all the kingdoms from the river to the land of the Philistines and the Egyptian border. ²⁷In Jerusalem the king made silver as common as stone, and cedars as plentiful as the sycamores of the Lowlands. ²⁸Horses were imported for Solomon from Cilicia and all the other countries too.

²⁹The rest of the history of Solomon, from first to last, is recorded in the History of Nathan the prophet, in the Prophecy of Ahijah of Shiloh, and in the Vision of Iddo, the seer concerning Jeroboam son of Nebat. ³⁰Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel for forty years. ³¹Then Solomon rested with his fathers and was buried in the City of

David his father; his son Rehoboam succeeded him.

The division of the kingdom

10 ¹Rehoboam went to Shechem where all the people of northern Israel had gone to proclaim him king. ²As soon as Jeroboam son of Nebat heard the news – he was still in Egypt where he had gone to escape from king Solomon – he returned from Egypt. ³The people of the northern tribes sent for him, and he came with the whole assembly.

And they said this to Rehoboam, ⁴“Your father placed heavy burdens on us. If you make these burdens lighter for us, we will serve you.” ⁵He said, “Come back to me in three days.” And the people went away.

⁶King Rehoboam consulted the older men who had served as advisers to his father Solomon and asked them, “What reply do you advise me to give to this people?” ⁷They said, “If you are kind to these people and listen to them and treat them fairly, then they will serve you forever.” ⁸But he rejected the advice given him by the elders and consulted the bloody young men who had grown up with him. ⁹He asked, “How do you advise us to answer these people who have said to me, ‘Lighten the burden your father put on us?’” ¹⁰The bloody young men who had grown up with him replied, “Give this answer to these people who have said, ‘Your father gave us a heavy burden to bear, you must lighten it for us.’ Say this to them, ‘My little finger is thicker than my father’s waist! ¹¹My father made you bear a heavy burden, but I will make it heavier still! My father beat you with whips; I am going to beat you with bullwhips!’ ”

¹²Jeroboam with all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day according to what the king had said, “Come back to me on the third day.” ¹³King Rehoboam, rejecting the advice of the elders, gave them a harsh answer ¹⁴and spoke to them as the bloody young men had recommended, “My father made you bear a heavy burden, but I will make it heavier still. My father beat you with whips; I am going to beat you with bullwhips!” ¹⁵The king in fact paid no attention to the people’s wishes, and this was brought about by God to carry out what Yahweh had spoken through Ahijah of Shiloh to Jeroboam son of Nebat. ¹⁶When all Israel saw that the king paid no attention to their wishes, they gave him this answer: “Down with David and his descendants! What have they ever done for us? To your tents, men of Israel; let’s go home. From now on let Rehoboam look out for himself!”

¹⁷So the people of Israel rebelled and Rehoboam was left with those people of Israel who lived in the towns of Judah. ¹⁸King

Rehoboam sent Adoram who was in charge of forced labor, but the Israelites stoned him to death; ¹⁹whereupon King Rehoboam was obliged to mount his chariot and escape to Jerusalem. And the people of Israel have been in rebellion against the family of David until the present day.

11 ¹Rehoboam went to Jerusalem and called together the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, a hundred and eighty thousand selected warriors, to fight the northern tribes of Israel and win back the kingdom of Rehoboam. ²But the word of Yahweh came to the prophet Shemaiah, ³“Say this to Rehoboam son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all the Israelites in Judah and Benjamin, ‘Yahweh says this: ⁴Do not attack your fellow Israelites; let everyone go home, for what has happened is my doing.’ ” ⁵They obeyed Yahweh’s command and went back, instead of fighting against Jeroboam.

Rehoboam

Rehoboam lived in Jerusalem and built fortified towns in Judah. ⁶He rebuilt Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, ⁷Bethzur, Soco, Adullam, ⁸Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, ⁹Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, ¹⁰Zorah, Aijalon, Hebron; these were fortified towns in Judah and Benjamin. ¹¹He fortified them with walls and put commanders in them with stores of food, oil and wine. ¹²In each of these towns were shields and spears. He made them very strong to keep Judah and Benjamin under control.

¹³From all the territory of Israel, priests and Levites came south to Judah. ¹⁴The Levites, indeed, abandoned their pasture lands and their holdings, and came to Judah and Jerusalem, since Jeroboam and his sons did not recognize them as the only priests of Yahweh ¹⁵and had appointed priests of his own to serve at the High places to worship the goats and the bullcalves he had made. ¹⁶Members of all the tribes of Israel, people who sincerely wanted to worship Yahweh the God of Israel, followed them and came to Jerusalem to sacrifice to Yahweh, the God of their ancestors. ¹⁷These Israelites added strength to the kingdom of Judah, and gave their support to Rehoboam son of Solomon for three years, because during three years he followed the example of David and Solomon.

¹⁸Rehoboam took as wife Mahalath the daughter of Jerimoth, son of David and of Abihail, daughter of Eliab, son of Jesse. ¹⁹She bore him sons: Jeush, Shemariah and Zaham. ²⁰After her, he married Maacah daughter of Absalom, who bore him Abijah, Attai, Ziza and Shelomith. ²¹Rehoboam loved Maacah, daughter of Absalom, more than all his other wives and concubines. He

had in fact a total of eighteen wives and sixty concubines, twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters. ²²Rehoboam favored Abijah, Maacah's son over all his other children, choosing him as the one to succeed him as king. ²³Rehoboam ruled prudently by scattering his sons throughout Judah and Benjamin in the fortified towns, where he provided them with generous provisions and many wives.

12 ¹As soon as Rehoboam had established his authority as king and had become powerful, he and all his people abandoned the Law of Yahweh. ²In the fifth year of Rehoboam, Shishak the king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem, since it had been unfaithful to Yahweh. ³With twelve hundred chariots and sixty thousand horses and countless army of Libyans, Sukkiim and Ethiopians who came from Egypt with him, ⁴he captured the fortified towns of Judah and reached Jerusalem. Rehoboam and the Judaeans captains, at the advance of Shishak, had gathered near Jerusalem; ⁵to them came Shemaiah the prophet and he said, "Yahweh says this: as you have abandoned me, now I have abandoned you into the hands of Shishak. ⁶Then the Israelite captains and the king humbled themselves and said, "Yahweh is just!" ⁷When Yahweh saw that they had humbled themselves, the word of Yahweh came to Shemaiah. "They have humbled themselves; because of this I will not destroy them. In a little while I will grant them deliverance; my anger shall not fall on Jerusalem through the power of Shishak. ⁸Nevertheless they shall become his slaves, so that they may come to understand the difference between serving me and serving the kings of foreign countries."

⁹Shishak the king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem and took all the treasures from the Temple of Yahweh and from the royal palace. He took everything, including the golden shields that Solomon had made; ¹⁰in place of them King Rehoboam had bronze shields made, entrusting them to the care of the officers of the guard who guarded the king's palace gate. ¹¹Whenever the king went to the Temple of Yahweh, the guards would come out carrying them, and return them to the guardroom afterward. ¹²Since he had submitted to Yahweh, the anger of Yahweh did not completely destroy him. There was still something good in Judah.

¹³King Rehoboam was able to strengthen his position in Jerusalem and to govern. Now Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he became king and he reigned for seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city chosen by Yahweh out of all the tribes of Israel, as the place where his Name would be. Rehoboam's

mother was Naamah, the Ammonitess. ¹⁴He did evil, because he had not set his heart on seeking Yahweh.

¹⁵The history of Rehoboam, from first to last, is all recorded in the Annals of Shemaiah the prophet and of Iddo the seer. There was constant warfare between Rehoboam and Jeroboam. ¹⁶Then Rehoboam rested with his fathers and was buried in the City of David; his son Abijah succeeded him.

Abijah

13 ¹In the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam, Abijah became king of Judah ²and reigned for three years in Jerusalem. His mother was Micaiah, daughter of Uriel, from Gibeon. Abijah and Jeroboam were at war. ³Abijah went into battle with an army of brave fighters, four hundred thousand picked men, while Jeroboam drew up his battle line against him with eight hundred thousand picked men, brave soldiers.

⁴Abijah went up Mount Zemaraim, in the hill country of Ephraim, and cried, "Jeroboam and all Israel, listen to me! ⁵Do you know that Yahweh the God of Israel has given the kingship of Israel to David forever? It is an unbreakable covenant for him and for his sons. ⁶Yet Jeroboam son of Nebat, a servant of Solomon son of David, has rebelled against his king; ⁷worthless men, scoundrels, have rallied to him and opposed Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. Rehoboam, then a young man and timid, was unable to resist them. ⁸Now you propose to subdue the Kingdom of Yahweh that he gave to David's descendants. You stand here with a huge army, but you are bringing the golden calves that Jeroboam made you for gods! ⁹Have you not driven out the priests of Yahweh, the sons of Aaron and the Levites, to make priests of your own like the peoples of foreign countries? Anyone who comes with a bull and seven rams can ask to be consecrated and become priest of what is no god at all! ¹⁰As for us, our God is Yahweh, and we have not abandoned him: the sons of Aaron minister to Yahweh, and the Levites as well. ¹¹Every morning, every evening, we burn burnt offerings to Yahweh our God, we have the incense of sweet spices, the loaves set out in rows on the pure table, the golden lampstand with its lamps that burn each evening; for we observe the ritual of Yahweh our God, that you have abandoned. ¹²See how God is with us, at our head; see his priests with the trumpets, which they will sound against you. People of Israel, do not fight against Yahweh, the God of our ancestors, for you will not succeed."

¹³Jeroboam outflanked the Judaeans by setting an ambush behind them; the Judaeans were facing the Israelites with the

ambush at their rear. ¹⁴The Judaeans, turning about, found themselves attacked from the front and the rear. They called on Yahweh and while the priests sounded the trumpets, ¹⁵the men of Judah raised the war cry. And as they raised the war cry, God scattered Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and the people of Judah. ¹⁶The Israelites fled before Judah and God delivered them into the power of the Judaeans. ¹⁷Abijah and his army inflicted a crushing defeat on them: five hundred thousand of Israel's chosen men were killed. ¹⁸And so the people of Israel were humbled and the people of Judah were victorious because they relied on Yahweh, the God of their ancestors.

¹⁹Abijah pursued Jeroboam's army and captured towns from him: Bethel with its outlying villages, Jeshanah with its outlying villages and Ephron with its outlying villages. ²⁰So in the lifetime of Abijah, Jeroboam could no longer maintain his power. Yahweh struck him down, and he died. ²¹But Abijah grew in strength; he took fourteen wives and had twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters. ²²The rest of the history of Abijah, his conduct and his deeds, is not all this recorded in the commentary of the prophet Iddo? ²³Then Abijah rested with his fathers and they buried him in the City of David; his son Asa succeeded him.

In his time the country was at peace for ten years.

Asa

14 ¹Asa did what is good and right in the eyes of Yahweh. ²He removed the altars of foreign worship and the High places. He broke down the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah's trunks. ³He commanded the people of Judah to do the will of Yahweh, the God of their ancestors, and to observe the Law and its commands. ⁴He removed the High places and the altars of incense in every town of Judah. The kingdom was at peace under his rule. ⁵He rebuilt the fortified towns of Judah, since the country was at peace, and there was no war during those years, for Yahweh granted him peace.

⁶He told the people of Judah, "Let us rebuild these towns and surround them with walls and towers, with gates and bars while we have control of this land, since we have done the will of Yahweh our God; and he has protected us and given us peace on every side."

⁷They built and prospered. Asa had an army of three hundred thousand Judaeans armed with buckler and spear, and two hundred eighty thousand Benjaminites bearing shield and wielding the bow, all of them brave, well-trained men.

⁸Zerah the Cushite, with an army one

million strong and three hundred chariots, made an incursion which reached to Mareshah. ⁹Asa marched against him and drew up his battle line in the Valley of Zephathah, at Mareshah. ¹⁰He called on Yahweh, his God, "Yahweh, no one but you can stand up for the powerless against the powerful. Come to our help, Yahweh our God! We rely on you, and fight against this huge army in your name. Yahweh, you are our God. Let no one defeat you."

¹¹Yahweh defeated the Cushites when Asa and the Judaeans attacked them. The Cushites fled, ¹²and Asa pursued them with his army as far as Gerar. The Cushites fell even to the last for they had been overpowered by Yahweh and his camp. They collected great amounts of loot. ¹³They conquered all the towns in the area of Gerar, for the terror of Yahweh had fallen on these towns and they plundered them all since they were full of loot. ¹⁴They also attacked the camps of some shepherds and carried off great numbers of sheep and camels; then they returned to Jerusalem.

15 ¹The spirit of God came on Azariah, son of Obed; ²he went out to meet Asa and said, "Listen to me, Asa, and all you of Judah and of Benjamin. Yahweh is with you so long as you are with him. When you look for him, he lets you find him; when you turn away, he will abandon you. ³For a long time Israel will be without the true God, and without priest to teach the Law, ⁴but when trouble comes, they will turn to Yahweh, the God of Israel. They will look for him and find him. ⁵When that time comes, there will be no peace for anyone, for many troubles will come upon all the inhabitants of the earth. ⁶One nation will oppress another nation, and one city another city, because God will bring trouble and distress on them. ⁷But for your part, take courage, and be strong, for your deeds will be rewarded."

⁸When Asa heard these words and this prophecy, he was encouraged to do away with all the idols throughout the land of Judah and Benjamin, and in the towns he had captured in the highlands of Ephraim; he then repaired the altar of Yahweh that stood in front of the Hall of Yahweh. ⁹He gathered all Judah and Benjamin together, and also the Ephraimites, Manassites and Simeonites who had settled with them, since great numbers of Israelites had gone over to Asa's side when they saw that Yahweh was with him. ¹⁰In the third month of the fifteenth year of Asa they assembled in Jerusalem; ¹¹and they sacrificed to Yahweh that day seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep out of the spoil they had brought back. ¹²They made a covenant in which they agreed to

seek Yahweh, the God of their ancestors, with all their heart and soul; ¹³ anyone who would not seek Yahweh the God of Israel was to be put to death, young or old, man or woman. ¹⁴ They pledged their oath to Yahweh aloud with shouts to the sound of trumpet and horn; ¹⁵ all Judah rejoiced at the oath they had wholeheartedly taken. They sought Yahweh so earnestly that he let them find him, and granted them peace on every side.

¹⁶ King Asa took from his mother Maacah her title of queen mother, because she had made a hideous idol for Asherah. Asa cut down the idol, and burned it at the Wadi Kidron. ¹⁷ Though the high places were not abolished in Israel, the heart of Asa was blameless all his life. ¹⁸ He deposited the offerings dedicated by his father and his own offerings too, in the house of God, silver and gold and furnishings. ¹⁹ Up to the thirty-fifth year of Asa's reign there was no war.

16 ¹ In the thirty-sixth year of Asa's reign, Baasha king of Israel invaded Judah and fortified Ramah to blockade Asa king of Judah. ² Asa then took the silver and gold from the treasuries of Yahweh's House and the royal palace, and sent it with the following message to Ben-hadad king of Aram who lived in Damascus, ³ "Let there be a covenant between myself and you, as between my father and your father! With this I send you silver and gold. Come, break off your alliance with Baasah king of Israel, so that he goes away from me. ⁴ Ben-hadad agreed, and sent his generals against the towns of Israel; he conquered Ijon, Dan, Abelmaim and all the garrison towns of Naphtali. ⁵ When Baasha heard this he stopped fortifying Ramah, abandoning this work. ⁶ King Asa then brought all the people of Judah, who took away the stones and timber with which Baasah had been fortifying Ramah, and the king used them to fortify Geba and Mizpah.

⁷ It was then that Hanani, the prophet, came to Asa king of Judah and said, "Since you have relied on the king of Aram and not on Yahweh your God, the army of the king of Aram will escape from you. ⁸ Did not the Cushites and Libyans form a vast army with great numbers of chariots and horses? And were they not delivered into your power because you relied on Yahweh? ⁹ Yahweh keeps close watch over the whole world to give strength to those who are devoted to him wholeheartedly. You have acted foolishly in this matter, for from now on you will have wars."

¹⁰ Asa was very angry with the prophet and had him put in chains in prison, for he was angry because of these words. At the same time Asa treated some others harshly too.

¹¹ The history of Asa, from first to last, is recorded in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. ¹² A disease attacked Asa from head to foot in the thirty-ninth year of his reign; and, what is more, he turned in his sickness, not to Yahweh, but to doctors. ¹³ Then Asa rested with his fathers in the forty-first year of his reign. ¹⁴ They buried him in the tomb he had ordered to be dug for himself in the City of David. They laid him on a couch entirely covered with spices and varied ointments, products of the perfumer's skill, and lit a huge fire for him.

Jehoshaphat

17 ¹ His son Jehoshaphat succeeded him and strengthened his position against Israel. ² He put troops in all the fortified towns in Judah, and appointed governors in the land of Judah and in all the towns of Ephraim captured by his father Asa.

³ Yahweh blessed Jehoshaphat because he followed the example of David his father and did not worship Baal; ⁴ he served the God of his father, following his commandments and not following the example of Israel. ⁵ So Yahweh made the kingship secure in his hands; all the people of Judah brought gifts to Jehoshaphat, and ample riches and honor were his. ⁶ He took pride in serving Yahweh and destroyed all the High places and Asherah's trunks in Judah.

⁷ In the third year of his reign he sent his officers: Benhail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel and Micaiah, to give instruction in the towns of Judah. ⁸ With them went the Levites: Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asaherel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah and Tobijah, the Levites, together with the priests, Elishama and Jehoram. ⁹ They gave instruction in Judah, having with them the book of the Law of Yahweh, and went around all the towns of Judah instructing the people.

¹⁰ The fear of Yahweh came upon all the kingdoms surrounding Judah, so that they did not war against Jehoshaphat. ¹¹ Some of the Philistines brought him gifts and silver in tribute; the Arabs themselves brought him, in small stock, seven thousand seven hundred rams and seven thousand seven hundred he-goats. ¹² Jehoshaphat became more and more powerful. Throughout Judah he built fortresses and towns with storage places.

¹³ He had many workers in the towns of Judah and a garrison of outstanding officers in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ This was their disposition by families: for Judah, commanders of thousands; Adnah, the commanding officer, with three hundred thousand outstanding officers under his command, ¹⁵ Jehohanan with two hundred and eighty thousand; ¹⁶ Amasiah son of Zichri, who had volunteered for

Yahweh's service, with two hundred thousand valiant warriors.

¹⁷From Benjamin: the valiant warrior Eliada with two hundred thousand, armed with bow and shield: ¹⁸under his command, Jehozabad with a hundred and eighty thousand equipped for war.

¹⁹These were the men who served the king, not counting those the king had put in the fortified towns throughout Judah.

Jehoshaphat and Ahab

18 ¹Jehoshaphat, then, enjoyed great wealth and honor and allied himself by marriage to Ahab. ²After some years he went to visit Ahab in Samaria. Ahab slaughtered for him and for his retinue great numbers of sheep and oxen; then urged him to attack Ramoth-gilead. ³And he asked Jehoshaphat, "Will you come with me to Ramoth-gilead?" Jehoshaphat answered the king of Israel, "I am with you, my men are yours, and we will fight together."

⁴Jehoshaphat, however, said to the king of Israel, "First, please consult the word of Yahweh." ⁵So the king of Israel called the prophets who were four hundred men, and asked them, "Should we march to attack Ramoth-gilead, or should I refrain?" They replied, "Go, because Yahweh will deliver it into your power." ⁶But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there no other prophet of Yahweh here for us to consult?" ⁷The king of Israel answered, "There is one more man through whom we can consult Yahweh, but I hate him because he never tells me good things but only discouraging words. He is Micaiah son of Imlah." Jehoshaphat said, "The king should not say such things." ⁸Accordingly the king of Israel summoned one of his officials and said, "Bring Micaiah son of Imlah immediately."

⁹The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah were both sitting on their thrones in royal garments; they sat at the threshing-floor outside the gate of Samaria, with all the prophets raving in front of them. ¹⁰Zedekiah son of Chenaanah had made himself iron horns and said, "Yahweh says this: You will gore the Arameans till you make an end of them." ¹¹And all the prophets prophesied the same saying, "March to Ramoth-gilead, for you will succeed. Yahweh will deliver it into the power of the king."

¹²In the meantime the messenger who had gone to summon Micaiah said to him, "All the prophets as one man are foretelling victory to the king. Try to speak like one of them and foretell success." ¹³But Micaiah answered, "As Yahweh lives, what my God says, that will I utter!" ¹⁴When he came to the king, the king asked him, "Micaiah, should we go to attack Ramoth-gilead, or should I refrain?" He answered, "Go and you will succeed. They will

be delivered into your power." ¹⁵But the king said, "How often must I beg you to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of Yahweh?"

¹⁶Then Micaiah said, "I have seen all Israel scattered on the mountains like sheep without a shepherd. And Yahweh said, 'These have no master, let each one go home in peace.'"

¹⁷At this the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell you that he never foretells me good things, but only what is discouraging?" ¹⁸Micaiah went on. "Listen to the word of Yahweh. I have seen Yahweh seated on his throne; all the array of heaven stood to his right and to his left. ¹⁹Yahweh said, 'Who will trick Ahab king of Israel so that he goes and falls at Ramoth-gilead?' At which some answered one way, and some another. ²⁰Then a spirit stepped forward, approached Yahweh and said, 'I will trick him.' Yahweh asked, 'How?' ²¹He replied, 'I will go and become a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets.' Yahweh said, 'You shall trick him and succeed. Go and do it.' ²²So Yahweh has put a lying spirit into the mouths of your prophets here because he himself wants you to meet with disaster!"

²³Then Zedekiah, son of Chenaanah came up and slapped Micaiah's face, and he asked, "When did the spirit of Yahweh leave me, to talk to you?" ²⁴Micaiah replied, "This is what you will find out the day you flee from house to house to hide." ²⁵The king of Israel said, "Seize Micaiah and hand him over to Amon, governor of the city, and to Prince Joash, ²⁶and say: This is the king's order: Put this man in prison and feed him on nothing but bread and water until I come back safe and sound." ²⁷Micaiah said, "If you come back safe and sound, Yahweh has not spoken through me."

²⁸The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah went to attack the city of Ramoth in Gilead. ²⁹The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself as we go into battle, but I want you to wear your royal clothes." ³⁰The king of Aram had given his chariot commanders the following order: "Do not attack anyone of whatever rank, except the king of Israel." ³¹When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they thought he was the king of Israel. And they wheeled to the attack. But Jehoshaphat gave a shout and Yahweh came to his help, God rescued him and turned the attack away from him. ³²The chariot commanders realized that he was not the king of Israel and called off their pursuit.

³³By chance, however, one of the soldiers shot an arrow which struck the king of Israel between the joints of his armor. The king said to his charioteer, "Turn around and get me out of the battle; I have been hurt." ³⁴But the

battle grew fiercer so that they held the king upright in his chariot facing the Aramaeans until evening, and at sunset he died.

19 ¹Jehoshaphat came back safe and sound to Jerusalem. ²Jehu, son of Hanani the prophet, went to meet him and said to king Jehoshaphat, "Should a man give help to the wicked? Should you love those who hate Yahweh? Because of this you have brought his anger on you! ³There is some good in you, however, since you have removed from your land Asherah's trunks and have set your heart on seeking God."

⁴Jehoshaphat stayed for a time in Jerusalem. After that he would again visit his people regularly, from Beersheba to the highlands of Ephraim to bring them back to Yahweh, the God of their ancestors. ⁵He appointed judges in the country in every one of all the fortified towns of Judah. ⁶He said to these judges, "Give due thought to your duties, since you are not judging in people's name but in the name of Yahweh, who is with you whenever you pronounce sentence. ⁷May the fear of Yahweh now be on you. Keep the Law, apply it, for Yahweh our God does not tolerate fraud or partiality or the taking of bribes."

⁸In addition, Jehoshaphat appointed priests, Levites and heads of Israelite families in Jerusalem as judges in cases involving a violation of the Law or legal disputes between people living in the city. They lived in Jerusalem ⁹and Jehoshaphat gave them the following instructions, "You are to perform these duties in the fear of Yahweh, as upright and honest men. ¹⁰Whatever dispute comes before you from your brothers living in their towns: either about crimes or questions of the Law, you are to teach them the commandments, statutes or ordinances, so that they do not become guilty of sinning against Yahweh, lest his anger come on you and your brothers. Do this and you will not be guilty.

¹¹Amariah, the chief priest, will have final authority over you in all religious matters, and Zebadiah son of Ishmael, governor of Judah, in all matters affecting the king. The Levites will serve as your scribes. Be courageous, carry out these instructions, and Yahweh will be there to bring success."

20 ¹After this the Moabites and Ammonites with some of the Meunites started to make war on Jehoshaphat. ²Jehoshaphat received the following message, "A large army is advancing against you from Edom, from the other side of the sea; they are already at Hazaaon-tamar, that is, Engedi." ³Jehoshaphat was frightened and prayed to Yahweh for guidance. Then he ordered that a fast be observed throughout the country. ⁴Judah assembled to seek help from Yah-

weh; they came seeking Yahweh's guidance from every single town in Judah.

⁵Then Jehoshaphat stood before this assembly of the people of Judah and Jerusalem in Yahweh's House, before the new court ⁶and said, "Yahweh, God of our ancestors, are you not the God who dwells in heaven? Do you not rule over all the kingdoms of the world? Such power and might are in your hands that no one can oppose you. ⁷Are you not our God, you who drove out the people who were living here before your people Israel and gave the land to the descendants of your friend Abraham forever? ⁸They have settled in it and built a sanctuary in it for your name, ⁹saying, 'Should disaster strike us, or war, punishment, epidemic, or famine, then we shall stand before this house and before you, for your Name rests on this house. From the depths of our distress we shall cry to you, and you will hear and save us.'

¹⁰Here now are the Ammonites and Moab and the folk of Seir. When Israel came out of the land of Egypt you would not let Israel invade them; instead, Israel turned away from them and did not destroy them, ¹¹and this is how they reward us, by coming to drive us out of the possessions you have given us as our inheritance. ¹²Will you, our God, not punish them, since we are helpless in the face of this large army that attacks us? We ourselves do not know what to do; but we look to you."

¹³All the men of Judah, even down to their youngest children and their wives, stood there at the House. ¹⁴In the middle of the assembly the spirit of Yahweh came on Jahaziel son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah the Levite, one of the sons of Asaph. ¹⁵And he cried, "Listen all you people of Judah and you who live in Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Yahweh says this to you: You must not be discouraged or afraid to face this large army; this battle is not yours but God's. ¹⁶March out against them tomorrow; they are coming up by the Slope of Ziz and you will come on them in the Valley of Soph, near the wilderness of Jeruel. ¹⁷You will not need to fight there, but only take up your position, stand firm, and see what salvation Yahweh has in store for you. Judah and Jerusalem, be fearless, be dauntless; go out to battle tomorrow and Yahweh will be with you."

¹⁸Jehoshaphat bent his head, his face to the ground, and all Judah with those who lived in Jerusalem fell down before Yahweh, worshiping him. ¹⁹Then the Levites – Kohathites and Korahites – began praising Yahweh the God of Israel at the top of their voices.

²⁰They rose early in the morning and left for the wilderness of Tekoa. As they were

setting out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Listen to me Judah and all who live in Jerusalem! Put your trust in Yahweh your God and you will stand your ground; have faith in his prophets and you will be successful."²¹ Then, having held a conference with the people, he ordered some musicians to put on the robes they wore on sacred occasions and to march at the head of the army, to sing praises to him: "Give praise to Yahweh, for his love is everlasting."²² As they began to sing their joy and their praise, Yahweh threw the invading armies into a panic and completely destroyed them. The Moabites and the Ammonites struck the people of Seir and there was a disaster.²³ For the Ammonites and Moabites turned on the mountain folk of Seir in savage fighting and after they had destroyed them, they began to kill one another.

²⁴When the men of Judah reached the spot that looks out on the wilderness and turned to face the enemy, they found only dead bodies lying on the ground; no one had escaped.²⁵ Jehoshaphat came with his troops to plunder them, and found quantities of cattle, goods, clothing and valuables; they collected more than they could take away; the loot was so plentiful that they were three days gathering it.²⁶ On the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Beracah; and there they did indeed praise Yahweh for all he had done. Because of this, this Valley was named the Valley of Beracah which it is still called.²⁷ Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin, with Jehoshaphat at their head, went back joyfully to Jerusalem, for Yahweh had filled them with joy at the expense of their enemies.²⁸ To the music of harp and lyre and trumpet they came to Jerusalem and to Yahweh's House.²⁹ When the kingdoms of foreign countries heard how Yahweh had defeated Israel's enemies, they were all terrified.³⁰ In the meantime, the kingdom of Jehoshaphat was calm, and God granted him peace on every side.

³¹Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah. He was thirty-five years old when he became king and he reigned for twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother was Azubah, daughter of Shilhi.³² He followed the example of his father Asa without wavering, doing what is right in the eyes of Yahweh.³³ The High places however, were not destroyed; the people had still not turned their hearts to the God of their ancestors.³⁴ The rest of the history of Jehoshaphat, from first to last, is recorded in the Annals of Jehu son of Hanani which have been transcribed into the Book of the Kings of Israel.

³⁵After this, Jehoshaphat king of Judah allied himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who led him into evil ways.³⁶ He combined with

him to build big ships that would sail to Tarshish. These were built at Eziongeber.³⁷ Eliezer, son of Dodavahu of Mareshah, then made a prophecy against Jehoshaphat, "Because you have allied yourself with Ahaziah, Yahweh has destroyed your plans." In fact the ships broke up and were never fit to sail to Tarshish.

Jehoram

21¹ Jehoshaphat rested with his ancestors and was buried in the City of David. His son Jehoram succeeded him.

²Jehoram had six brothers, sons of Jehoshaphat: Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azariahu, Michael and Shepatiah; these were all the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel.³ Their father had made them many gifts of silver, gold and jewels, and of fortified towns in Judah, but he made Jehoram his successor since he was the firstborn.⁴ When Jehoram was in firm control of the kingdom, he had all his brothers killed, as well as some Israelite officials.

⁵Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he became king and he reigned for eight years in Jerusalem.⁶ He followed the wicked example of the kings of Israel and did as the family of Ahab had done, for he had married one of Ahab's daughters; and he did what was evil in the eyes of Yahweh.⁷ Yahweh however did not intend to destroy the descendants of David, because of the covenant he had made with David, when he promised to leave a lamp for him and his sons forever.

⁸In his time Edom revolted against Judah and set up a king for itself.⁹ Jehoram invaded Edom with his commanders and all his chariots. He rose during the night and broke through and escaped from the Edomites encircling him and his chariot commanders.¹⁰ Thus Edom became independent of Judah, and has remained free to the present day. Libnah also revolted against Jehoram at the same time for he had deserted Yahweh, the God of his ancestors.¹¹ He also set up High places in the highlands of Judah and caused the people living in Jerusalem and Judah to sin against Yahweh.

¹²Then something written by the prophet Elijah came into his hand. It ran, "This is the word of Yahweh, the God of David your ancestor. You have not followed the example of your father Jehoshaphat or of Asa king of Judah,¹³ but the wicked example of the kings of Israel, and have caused Judah and the people living in Jerusalem to sin against Yahweh, just as Ahab and his successors did. You have also murdered your brothers, your own family, better men than yourself.¹⁴ Because of this Yahweh will strike you with a great calamity, which will come upon your people, your descendants, your wives and all

your property. ¹⁵You yourself will suffer a painful intestinal disease that will grow worse day by day.”

¹⁶Yahweh stirred up against Jehoram the Philistines and the Arabs bordering on the Cushites. ¹⁷They attacked Judah and invaded it, carrying off all they found in the king's palace, including his sons and his wives; the only son left him was Ahaziah, the youngest of them. ¹⁸And after all this, Yahweh brought on him a painful disease of the intestines. ¹⁹It lasted for more than one year, and when the two years were over and his last hour had come, he died in great pain. The people did not light a bonfire in mourning for him as they had for his father.

²⁰He was thirty-two years old when he became king and he reigned for eight years in Jerusalem. He passed away with no one to regret him, and they buried him in the City of David, though not in the tombs of the kings.

Ahaziah and his policy

22 ¹The people of Jerusalem proclaimed his youngest son, Ahaziah, king in place of him, since the armed band that had broken into the camp with the Arabs had killed all the elder sons. So Ahaziah son of Jehoram became king of Judah.

²Ahaziah was forty-two years old when he became king and he reigned for one year in Jerusalem. His mother was Athaliah, a granddaughter of Omri. ³He too followed the example of Ahab's family, since his mother gave him wicked advice. ⁴He sinned against Yahweh as Ahab's family had done, for they were his advisers after his father's death, and they led him to his downfall. ⁵He also put their policies into practice and went with Jeroham son of Ahab, king of Israel, to fight against Hazael king of Aram at Ramoth-gilead. But the Aramaeans wounded Jeroham, ⁶who returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds that he had received at Ramoth, fighting against Hazael king of Aram.

Ahaziah son of Jehoram, king of Judah, went down to Jezreel to visit Jehoram son of Ahab because he was ill. ⁷Yahweh used this visit to Jeroham to bring about Ahaziah's downfall. On his arrival he went out with Jeroham against Jehu son of Nimshi whom Yahweh had chosen to destroy the family of Ahab. ⁸While Jehu was busy carrying out God's sentence against Ahab's family, he came across the officials of Judah and the kinsmen of Ahaziah who were in the king's service and killed them. ⁹He then went in search of Ahaziah who was captured while he tried to hide in Samaria. He was taken to Jehu who put him to death. But they gave him burial, for they said, “This was a son of Jehoshaphat who sought Yahweh with all his heart.”

Athaliah

¹⁰There was no one left in the royal family of Ahaziah strong enough to reign. As soon as Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, learned that her son was dead, she promptly gave orders for all the members of the royal family of Judah to be killed. ¹¹But Jehosheba, daughter of king Joram, secretly rescued Joash, her brother's son, from among the sons of the king who were being murdered, and put him with his nurse in the sleeping quarters; in this way Jehosheba the daughter of King Joram and wife of Jehoiada the priest (a sister, too, of Ahaziah) hid him from Athaliah, and prevented her from killing him. ¹²He stayed with them for six years, hidden in the house of God, while Athaliah governed the country.

23 ¹After waiting six years Jehoiada the priest decided to take action. He sent for the commanders of hundreds: Azariah son of Jehoram, Ishmael son of Jehohanan, Azariah son of Obed, Maaseiah son of Adaiah and Elishaphat son of Zichri, and made a pact with them. ²They went through Judah, gathering the Levites from all the towns of Judah, and the heads of the Israelite families. They came to Jerusalem, ³and this whole assembly made a pact with the king in the house of God. Jehoiada told them, “Here is the son of the king, let him rule as king as Yahweh has promised regarding the descendants of David! ⁴This is what you must do: one third of you, priests, Levites and keepers of the gate, must come in for the sabbath, ⁵one third must be at the royal palace, one third at the Gate of Foundation, and all the people will be in the court of Yahweh's House. ⁶No one is to enter Yahweh's House except the priests and the Levites on duty, since they are consecrated and may enter. The people must all obey Yahweh's instructions and stay outside. ⁷The Levites must surround the king, each with his weapons in his hand; anyone who tries to enter the Temple is to be put to death. Stay with the king wherever he goes.”

⁸The Levites and all Judah carried out all the orders of Jehoiada the priest. Every commander summoned both those who went off duty on the Sabbath, and those coming on duty, because Jehoiada did not except anyone. ⁹Then Jehoiada the priest provided the commanders of hundreds with King David's spears and large and small shields, which were in the house of God. ¹⁰He stationed the men from the west wing to the east wing, between the House and the altar, each with spear in hand, to protect the king. ¹¹Then they brought out the king's son, crowned him and put on him the ornaments, and they proclaimed him king. Jehoiada and his sons then anointed him and shouted, “Long live the king!”

¹² Athaliah, on hearing the shouts of the people who were rushing to the king and acclaiming him, went to Yahweh's House where the people were. ¹³ When she saw the king standing there at the entrance beside the pillar, with the captains and trumpeters at his side, and all the people from the countryside rejoicing and sounding trumpets, and the cantors with their musical instruments leading the hymns, Athaliah tore her clothes in distress and shouted, "Treason, treason!" ¹⁴ Then Jehoiada the priest called out the military officers and ordered them, "Take her outside the Temple, and kill anyone who follows her." And he also said, "You must not put her to death in Yahweh's House." ¹⁵ They seized her, and when she had reached the palace at the entry to the Gate of the Horses, they put her to death there.

¹⁶ Jehoiada made a covenant between the king and all the people, by which they would be the people of Yahweh. ¹⁷ All the people then went to the house of Baal and tore it down; they smashed his altars and his images and killed Mattan, priest of Baal, in front of the altars.

¹⁸ Jehoiada posted sentries to guard Yahweh's House under the authority of the levitical priests. David had appointed them in Yahweh's House to offer the burnt offerings of Yahweh according to the Law of Moses, and to sing joyfully the songs of David. ¹⁹ He stationed gatekeepers at the gates of the Temple of Yahweh so that no one who was in any way unclean might enter. ²⁰ Then taking the commanders of hundreds, the notables, the ranking officials, and all the people from the countryside, he brought the king in procession from the House to the palace. They entered the royal palace through the main gate and seated the king on the royal throne. ²¹ All the people from the countryside were delighted, and the city was quiet. Athaliah was put to death.

Joash

24 ¹ Joash was seven years old when he became king and he reigned for forty years in Jerusalem. His mother was Zibiah of Beersheba. ² Joash did what is pleasing to Yahweh throughout the lifetime of Jehoiada the priest. ³ Jehoiada found him two wives and he had sons and daughters. ⁴ After that Joash decided to repair Yahweh's House.

⁵ Calling the priests and the Levites together, he said, "Go out to the towns of Judah, and collect enough money from all the Israelites to make possible annual repairs on the house of God. Do this quickly." But the Levites were in no hurry, ⁶ so the king called Jehoiada for he was their head, and said, "Why have you not insisted on the Levites collecting from Judah and Jerusalem the tax

which Moses, the servant of Yahweh, required the people to pay for the maintenance of the Tent of the Meeting?" ⁷ Athaliah and her sons, whom she perverted, damaged the house of God and even used many of the sacred objects in the worship of Baal." ⁸ So the king ordered them to make a chest and to place it outside the gate of Yahweh's House. ⁹ And they announced throughout Judah and Jerusalem that they had to bring to Yahweh the tax Moses, that servant of God, had required in the wilderness. ¹⁰ All the officials and all the people came joyfully with their contribution, dropping it into the chest until all was paid.

¹¹ The chest was taken to the royal office of control by the Levites whenever they saw that there was a great amount of money in it. The king's secretary then came with representatives of the chief priest to take the chest, empty it of money and later return it to its place. They did this every day, and collected a large sum of money. ¹² The king and Jehoiada gave the money to those who were in charge of repairing the House, and they hired men, masons and carpenters, who set about restoring Yahweh's House; craftsmen in iron and bronze also worked on the repairing of it. ¹³ The supervisors having once made a start, the repairs went ahead; they rebuilt the house of God as it was before, as solid as ever. ¹⁴ When they had finished, they brought the balance of the money to the king and Jehoiada, and from this, furnishings were made for Yahweh's House, vessels for the liturgy and for the burnt offerings, incense boats and objects of gold and silver.

So, for as long as Jehoiada lived they offered sacrifices regularly in Yahweh's House. ¹⁵ Then Jehoiada, growing old, had his fill of days and died. He died at the age of a hundred and thirty years, ¹⁶ and they buried him with the kings in the City of David because he had served Israel well and also God and his house.

¹⁷ After the death of Jehoiada, the officials of Judah came to pay court to the king, and the king now turned to them for advice. ¹⁸ The Judaeans abandoned the house of Yahweh, the God of their ancestors, for the worship of sacred trunks and idols and God's anger fell on Judah and Jerusalem because of their guilt. ¹⁹ He sent them prophets to bring them back to Yahweh, but when the prophets spoke, they would not listen. ²⁰ The spirit of God took control of Zechariah, son of Jehoiada the priest. He stood up before the people and said, "God says this: Why are you disobeying the commandments of Yahweh? You cannot prosper. You have abandoned Yahweh and he will abandon you." ²¹ They then plotted against him and by order of the king stoned him in the court of Yahweh's

House. ²²King Joash forgot the kindness of Jehoiada, the father of Zechariah, and killed Jehoiada's son who cried out as he died, "Let Yahweh see and do justice!"

²³When a year had gone by, the Aramaean army made war on Joash. They reached Judah and Jerusalem, and killed all the officials among the people, sending back to the king of Damascus all that they had plundered from them. ²⁴Though the Aramaean army was small, Yahweh delivered into its power an army of great size for they had abandoned him, the God of their ancestors.

²⁵The Aramaeans wounded Joash and when they withdrew they left him a very sick man; and his officers, plotting against him to avenge the death of the son of Jehoiada the priest, murdered him in his bed. So he died, and they buried him in the City of David, though not in the tombs of the king. ²⁶These were the conspirators: Zabad son of Shimeath the Ammonite woman, and Jehoabad son of Shimrith the Moabitess. ²⁷As regard his sons, the heavy tribute he demanded, and the restoration of the house of God, this is all recorded in the commentary on the Book of the Kings. His son Amaziah succeeded him.

Amaziah

25 ¹Amaziah was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned for twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother was Hehoassan of Jerusalem. ²He did what is pleasing to Yahweh, though not steadily. ³As soon as he was firmly in power, he killed those of his officers who had murdered the king his father. ⁴But he did not put their sons to death, in obedience to what is written in the Law, in the book of Moses, where Yahweh has ordered, "Fathers must not be put to death for sons, nor sons for fathers; but everyone will pay for his own crime."

⁵Amaziah called the people of Judah together and organized them in families with commanders of thousands and of hundreds for all Judah and Benjamin. He counted those who were twenty years old or older, and found there were three hundred thousand of selected warriors fit for military service, and for handling spear and shield. ⁶Next, he enrolled one hundred thousand from Israel as mercenaries, for about four tons of silver. ⁷A man of God then came to him and said, "O king, don't take these Israelite soldiers with you, for Yahweh is not with Israel or with any of the Ephraimites. ⁸If they come, whatever be the number of your men, God will still bring you down before your enemies, for God's is the power to uphold or to throw down." ⁹Amaziah answered the man of God, "And what about

the four tons of silver I have given the Israelite soldiers?" The man of God replied, "Yahweh can give you far more than that." ¹⁰At this, Amaziah dismissed from his army the troops that had come to him from Ephraim and sent them home; these men were furious with Judah and went home in great anger.

¹¹Amaziah led his army to Salt Valley and defeated ten thousand Edomite soldiers. ¹²The men of Judah took ten thousand captives alive and, taking them to the top of the cliff, threw them off the top; they were all dashed to pieces. ¹³Then the Israelite troops which Amaziah had dismissed and not allowed to fight with him raided the towns of Judah, from Samaria as far as Bethhoron, but they were defeated by a troop of three thousand men who recovered great quantities of plunder.

¹⁴On returning from his defeat of the Edomites, Amaziah brought the gods of the Edomites with him and set these up as gods for himself, bowing down before them and burning incense to them. ¹⁵Then Yahweh became angry with Amaziah and he sent him a prophet, who said, "Why have you looked to this people's gods, who could not save their own people from your power?" ¹⁶He was still speaking when Amaziah interrupted him, "Have we appointed you a royal counselor? If you do not want to be hurt, be quiet!" The prophet paused; then he said, "Now I know that God has decided to destroy you, since after having acted like this, you refuse to listen to me."

¹⁷After consulting his advisers, Amaziah king of Judah sent a message to Joash son of Jehoahaz, son of Jehu, king of Israel, challenging him to fight. ¹⁸Joash king of Israel sent back word to Amaziah king of Judah, "The thornbush of Lebanon sent a message to the cedar of Lebanon, saying, 'Give my son your daughter in marriage'; but the wild animals of Lebanon trampled the thornbush down as they passed. You are very proud because you have defeated the Edomites – Boast on but stay at home. ¹⁹Why stir up trouble that will only bring disaster on you and your people?"

²⁰But Amaziah would not listen. It was God's will for him to be defeated, because he had worshiped the Edomite idols. ²¹And at Bethshemesh Judah, they made their trial of strength, Joash and Amaziah king of Judah. ²²Judah was defeated by Israel, and everyone fled to his tent. ²³The king of Judah, Amaziah son of Joash, son of Ahaziah, was taken prisoner at Bethshemesh by Joash, king of Israel who led him off to Jerusalem, where Joash tore down the city wall from the Gate of Ephraim to the Gate of the Corner, a distance of two hundred yards. ²⁴He took all the gold and silver, all the furnishings to be

found with Obed-edom in the House of God, the treasures of the royal palace, and hostages besides, and then returned to Samaria.

²⁵ Amaziah son of Joash, king of Judah, lived for fifteen years after the death of Joash son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel.

²⁶ The rest of the history of Amaziah, from first to last, is all recorded in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. ²⁷ After the time when Amaziah rebelled against Yahweh, there had been a plot against him in Jerusalem; he fled to Lachish; but he was followed to Lachish and put to death there. ²⁸ He was brought back by horse, and buried with his ancestors in the City of David.

Uzziah

26 ¹ All the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and, made him king in place of his father Amaziah. ² He rebuilt Elath and recovered it for Judah, after the death of Amaziah. ³ Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king and he reigned for fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother was Jecoliah, of Jerusalem. ⁴ He did what is pleasing to Yahweh, just as his father Amaziah had done; ⁵ he sought God in the lifetime of Zechariah, who taught him the fear of God. And for as long as he sought Yahweh, God gave him prosperity.

⁶ He went out to fight the Philistines, tore down the walls of Gath, Jabneh and Ashdod, then rebuilt the towns in the area of Ashdod and in Philistine territory. ⁷ God helped him defeat the Philistines, the Arabs, the inhabitants of Gurbaal and the Meunites. ⁸ The Ammonites paid tribute to Uzziah. His fame spread as far as the border of Egypt, since he had become very powerful indeed.

⁹ Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem, at the Gate of the Corner, at the Gate of the Valley and at the Angle; and he fortified these. ¹⁰ He built towers in the wilderness too, and dug a great many cisterns, for he had large herds in the lowlands and on the tableland; and he had farmers and vinedressers in the hills and on the fertile lands; he was fond of agriculture.

¹¹ Uzziah had an army ready for battle. They set out for war by turns, according to the census carried out by the scribe Jeiel and the registrar Maaseiah. Their commander was Hananiah, one of the king's officers. ¹² The total number of heads of families among these valiant warriors was two thousand six hundred. ¹³ Under their command was a trained army of three hundred and seven thousand five hundred fighting men, a powerful force to support the king against the enemy. ¹⁴ Uzziah provided them with shields, spears, helmets, coats of armor, bows and sling stones, for each battle. ¹⁵ In Jerusalem he constructed engines, invented by experts, which were mounted on the towers and at the

corners to fire arrows and great stones. His fame spread far and wide; for he was extraordinary in getting help until he was strong.

¹⁶ But, as his power increased, he became so proud that he lost what he had gained. He defied Yahweh his God by going into the House to burn incense on the altar of incense. ¹⁷ Azariah the priest followed King Uzziah in, with eighty brave priests of Yahweh, ¹⁸ to resist him. They said to him, "Uzziah, it is not for you to burn incense to Yahweh, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, consecrated for the purpose. Leave the sanctuary; you have offended Yahweh God and you no longer have his blessing." ¹⁹ Uzziah, censer in hand for the burning incense, became angry with the priests and immediately, leprosy broke out on his forehead in the presence of the priests, in Yahweh's House, there by the altar of incense. ²⁰ Azariah the chief priest and all the other priests turned toward him and saw the leprosy on his forehead. They quickly hurried him out, and he himself was anxious to go, since Yahweh had punished him.

²¹ King Uzziah was a leper till his dying day. He lived in an isolated house, a leper, excluded from Yahweh's House. Jotham, his son, was master of the palace, and ruled the people of the country.

²² The rest of the history of Uzziah, from first to last, has been written by the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. ²³ Then Uzziah rested with his ancestors and they buried him in the ground where the tomb of the kings is, for they said, "He is a leper." His son Jotham succeeded him.

Jotham

27 ¹ Jotham was twenty-five years old when he became king and he reigned for sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother was Jerushah, daughter of Zadok. ² He did what is pleasing to Yahweh, just as his father Uzziah had done. But he did not enter the sanctuary of Yahweh. As for the people, they went on sinning.

³ He built the Upper Gate of Yahweh's House and carried out considerable work on the wall of the Ophel. ⁴ He built towns in the highlands of Judah, and fortified places and towers in the fertile lands.

⁵ He fought against the king of the Ammonites. He defeated them, and that year the Ammonites gave him four tons of silver, fifty thousand bushels of wheat and ten thousand of barley. And they had to pay him the same for the second and third years. ⁶ Jotham became powerful because he faithfully obeyed Yahweh his God.

⁷ The rest of the deeds of Jotham, all his wars and his policy, are recorded in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah. ⁸ He was twenty-five years old when he became king

and he reigned for sixteen years in Jerusalem. ⁹Then Jotham rested with his ancestors and they buried him in the City of David; his son Ahaz succeeded him.

Ahaz

28 ¹Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned for sixteen years in Jerusalem. He did not do what is pleasing to Yahweh, as his ancestor David had done. ²He followed the example of the kings of Israel, and even had Baal's idols made of metal. ³He offered incense in the Valley of Ben-Hinnom and even sacrificed his own sons as burnt offerings to disgusting idols, copying the shameful practice of the people whom Yahweh had driven out of the land he would give to the Israelites. ⁴He offered sacrifices and incense at the High places, on the hills and under every spreading tree.

⁵Yahweh his God let the King of the Aramaeans defeat him and take great numbers of his people captive, carrying them off to Damascus. He was also delivered into the power of the king of Israel, who defeated him. ⁶In a single day, Pekah son of Remaliah killed a hundred and twenty thousand in Judah, all brave fighting men; this was because they had abandoned Yahweh, the God of their ancestors. ⁷Zichri, an Ephraimite champion, killed Maaseiah, son of the king, Azrikam the controller of the palace, and Elkanah the king's second-in-command. ⁸The Israelites took two hundred thousand of their Judaeans brothers captive, with wives, sons, and daughters; they also took quantities of loot, carrying everything off to Samaria.

⁹A prophet of Yahweh, named Oded, was there and he went out to meet the troops returning to Samaria and said, "Yahweh, the God of your ancestors, was angry with Judah and so he delivered them into your power, but you have slaughtered with such fury as reaches to heaven. ¹⁰And you intended to make the men and women of Jerusalem and Judah your slaves. But you yourselves are also guilty before Yahweh your God. ¹¹Now listen to me: release the prisoners you have taken of your brothers, or Yahweh will punish you in his anger."

¹²Some of the Ephraimite chieftains then stood up in opposition to those who returned from the war: Azariah son of Jehohanan, Berechiah son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah son of Shallum and Amasa son of Hadlai. ¹³They said, "You must not bring the captives in here for we are guilty enough before Yahweh. Will you add to our sins and to our guilt? But our guilt is already heavy and the fierce anger of Yahweh is hanging over Israel." ¹⁴So in the presence of the officials and of the whole assembly, the army gave up the cap-

tives and the loot. ¹⁵Four men were appointed to provide the prisoners with clothing. From the loot they clothed all those who were naked; they gave them clothing and sandals, provided them with food and drink, and washed them. Those who were too weak to walk they put on donkeys and took them back to their kinsmen at Jericho, the city of palm trees. Then they returned to Samaria.

¹⁶It was then that King Ahaz sent asking the kings of Assyria to come to his assistance, ¹⁷for the Edomites once again invaded and defeated Judah, and carried off prisoners. ¹⁸The Philistines were raiding the towns in the lowlands and in the Negeb of Judah. They took Bethshemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, and Soco with its outlying villages, Timnah with its outlying villages, Gimzo with its outlying villages, and they settled in them.

¹⁹Yahweh humbled Judah on account of Ahaz, king of Israel, who let Judah go its own way and was not faithful to Yahweh.

²⁰Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria attacked and besieged him but could not defeat him. ²¹Ahaz however had to take part of the goods in Yahweh's House and in the palaces of the king and princes, to hand over to the king of Assyria, yet he received no help from him. ²²During the time Jerusalem was under siege, King Ahaz sinned against Yahweh more than ever, ²³by offering sacrifices to the gods of Damascus who had defeated him. He said, "Since the gods of the kings of Aram have been of help to them, I will sacrifice to them so that they may be of help to me." But they proved to be his downfall and that of Israel.

²⁴Ahaz then took implements of the House and broke them in pieces; he closed the doors of Yahweh's House and put up altars at every street corner in Jerusalem; ²⁵he set up High places in every town of Judah to offer incense to other gods, and so brought on himself the anger of Yahweh, the God of his ancestors.

²⁶The rest of his history, his whole policy, from first to last, is recorded in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. ²⁷Then Ahaz rested with his ancestors and they buried him in the city, in Jerusalem, though he was not taken into the tombs of the kings of Israel. His son Hezekiah succeeded him.

Hezekiah

29 ¹Hezekiah became king when he was twenty-five years old and reigned for twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother was Abijah, daughter Zechariah. ²He did what is pleasing to Yahweh, just as his ancestor David had done.

³In the first month of the first year of his reign, he reopened the gates of Yahweh's House and repaired them. ⁴Then he brought

the priests and the Levites, assembled them in the eastern square,⁵ and said to them:

“Listen to me, Levites! Sanctify yourselves now and consecrate the house of Yahweh, the God of our ancestors, and remove from the House everything that defiles it.⁶ Your ancestors have been unfaithful and have done what is displeasing to Yahweh our God. They have abandoned him; they have turned their faces away from the place Yahweh has made his home, they have turned their backs on him.⁷ They have even closed the doors of the Vestibule, they have put out the lamps and offered neither incense nor burnt offerings to the God of Israel in the Sanctuary.⁸ So the anger of Yahweh has fallen on Judah and Jerusalem; and what he has done to them has shocked and frightened everyone, as you can see for yourselves.⁹ This is why our ancestors have fallen by the sword, and our sons, our daughters, and our wives have been taken captive.

¹⁰ But now I have decided to make a covenant with Yahweh, the God of Israel, so that his fierce anger may be turned away from us.¹¹ My people, be negligent no longer, for Yahweh has chosen you to stand in his presence and serve him, to worship him, and offer him incense.”

¹² The Levites set to work: Mahath son of Amasai and Joel son of Azariah, of the Kohathites; Kish son of Abdi and Azariah son of Jehallelel of the Merarites; Joah son of Zimmah and Eden son of Joah of the Gershonites;¹³ Shimri and Jeuel of the sons of Elizaphan; Zechariah and Mattaniah of the sons of Asaph;¹⁴ Jehiel and Shimei of the sons of Heman; and Shemaiah and Uzziel of the sons of Jeduthun.¹⁵ They gathered their fellow Levites together, purified them, and in obedience to the king’s order and in accordance with the words of Yahweh, they began consecrating in the Temple of Yahweh.

¹⁶ The priests went inside the house of Yahweh to make it clean. They brought everything unclean they found in the sanctuary of Yahweh, out into the court of Yahweh’s House, and the Levites collected it and carried it outside, into the Kidron Valley.¹⁷ They began this consecration on the first day of the first month, and were able to enter the Hall of Yahweh on the eight of the month; they then took eight days to consecrate Yahweh’s House, and finished on the sixteenth day of the first month.

¹⁸ They then went into the palace of King Hezekiah and said, “We have purified the whole Temple of Yahweh, the altar for burnt offerings with all its furnishings, and the table on which the rows of bread are set with all its furnishings.¹⁹ All the furnishings King Ahaz took away during those years he was unfaithful to Yahweh we have put back and conse-

crated; they are now in front of the altar of Yahweh.”

²⁰ King Hezekiah lost no time but called the officials of the city together and went up to Yahweh’s House.²¹ They brought seven bulls, seven rams and seven lambs, with seven he-goats as a sacrifice for sin on behalf of the royal house, of the sanctuary, and of Judah. The king then told the priests, the sons of Aaron, to offer the burnt offering on the altar of Yahweh.²² They slaughtered the bulls and the priests took up the blood and poured it on the altar. They then slaughtered the rams and poured their blood on the altar.²³ Then they brought the he-goats, the sacrifice for sin, before the king and the assembly who laid their hands on them.²⁴ The priests slaughtered them, and with their blood on the altar offered a sacrifice to take away the sin of all the people – since the king had ordered the burnt offering and the sacrifice for sin on behalf of all Israel.

²⁵ He then ordered the Levites to stand in Yahweh’s House with cymbals, harps and lyres, in accordance with the ordinances of David, of Gad the king’s prophet and of Nathan the prophet; the order had in fact come from Yahweh through his prophets.²⁶ When the Levites had taken their places with David’s musical instruments, and the priests with their trumpets,²⁷ Hezekiah ordered the burnt offering to begin, the hymns of Yahweh began too, and the trumpets sounded, to the accompaniment of the instruments of David king of Israel.²⁸ The whole assembly worshiped, cantors singing, trumpets sounding, until the holocaust was over.

²⁹ When the offering was at an end, the king and all there with him fell to their knees and worshiped.³⁰ Then King Hezekiah and the officials told the Levites to sing praise to Yahweh in the words of David and of Asaph the prophet; they sang praises till their joy was full and then they fell down and worshiped.³¹ Hezekiah spoke again, “Now you are dedicated to the service of Yahweh. Come forward, bring sacrifices and thanksgiving offerings into Yahweh’s House.” The assembly brought sacrifices and thanksgiving offerings: all the generous people brought burnt offerings.³² The number of victims for these burnt offerings was seventy bulls, a hundred rams and two hundred lambs, all as burnt offerings for Yahweh;³³ six hundred bulls and three hundred sheep were sacrificed.³⁴ The priests were too few, however, and could not slaughter all these animals, so the Levites helped them until the work was done and the other priests were sanctified; for the Levites were more educated than the priests regarding the requirements of purification.³⁵ There were indeed many burnt offerings besides the fat of the

peace offerings which was to be burnt together with the drink offerings. So was completed the consecration of Yahweh's House. ³⁶Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced that God had helped the people to act so promptly.

The great Passover

30 ¹Hezekiah sent messengers to all Judah and Israel (for he also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh), inviting them to come to Yahweh's House in Jerusalem to celebrate a Passover in honor of Yahweh, the God of Israel. ²The king and his officials and all the assembly in Jerusalem had agreed to celebrate it in the second month, ³being unable to celebrate it at the proper time, since the priests had not purified themselves in sufficient numbers, and the people had not assembled in Jerusalem. ⁴The king and all the assembly were pleased with their plan. ⁵They issued a decree to be proclaimed throughout Israel, from Dan to Beer-sheba, calling all the people to come to Jerusalem and celebrate a Passover in honor of Yahweh, the God of Israel, for they had not celebrated it for a long time. ⁶Messengers went out with letters from the hands of the king and his officials for every part of Israel and Judah. They had orders from the king to say, "People of Israel, come back to Yahweh the God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Israel, and he will come back to those of you who are left and have escaped the grasp of the kings of Assyria. ⁷Do not be like your fathers and brothers who were unfaithful to Yahweh, the God of their ancestors, and whom he punished severely as you can see. ⁸Do not harden your hearts as your ancestors did, but reconcile with Yahweh and come to his house which he has consecrated forever. Serve Yahweh your God and he will turn his fierce anger from you. ⁹If you come back sincerely to Yahweh, your brothers and your sons will win the mercy of their conquerors and return to this land, for Yahweh your God is gracious and merciful. If you come back to him, he will not turn his face from you."

¹⁰The messengers went from town to town through the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, but the people laughed at them and made fun of them, ¹¹though a few men from Asher and Manasseh and Zebulun were humble enough to come to Jerusalem. ¹²But in Judah, the hand of God was upon the people and made them of one mind to obey the order of the king and the officials according to the word of Yahweh. ¹³A great number of people gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month. A very great assembly ¹⁴set to work removing the altars that had been used in Jerusalem and all the altars for burning incense, and throwing them into the wadi Kidron.

¹⁵They killed the lambs for the passover sacrifice on the fourteenth day of the second month. The priests and the Levites felt ashamed; so they sanctified themselves and were able to bring burnt offerings into Yahweh's House. ¹⁶Then they took up their places in the House according to the instructions in the Law of Moses, the man of God. The priests poured out the blood handed to them by the Levites, ¹⁷since there were many people in the assembly who had not sanctified themselves; so the Levites were to slaughter the Passover lambs on behalf of those who lacked the requisite purity in order to consecrate them to Yahweh. ¹⁸For many people, especially from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun, had not purified themselves and so had eaten the Passover without observing the regulations.

But Hezekiah interceded for them, saying, ¹⁹"Yahweh, God of our ancestors, in your goodness forgive those who seek you with all their heart, even though they are not clean." ²⁰Yahweh heard Hezekiah and left the people unharmed.

²¹For seven days the Israelites rejoiced and celebrated in Jerusalem the feast of Unleavened Bread, while each day the Levites and the priests praised Yahweh with all their might. ²²At the end Hezekiah encouraged the Levites who had shown themselves skilled in the worship of Yahweh. ²³Then all the assembly agreed to continue the celebrations for a further seven days which they made seven days of rejoicing. ²⁴Hezekiah king of Judah had provided a thousand bulls and seven thousand sheep for the assembly, and the officials another thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep, and now the priests were ready in great numbers. ²⁵So the whole assembly of Judah rejoiced, the priests too, and the Levites, and all who had come from Israel, the refugees of Israel living in Judah and the people of Judah. ²⁶There was great rejoicing in Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon son of David, king of Israel, nothing like this had happened in Jerusalem. ²⁷The levitical priests began to bless the people. Their voices were heard and their prayer received in heaven, His holy dwelling place.

31 ¹When all this was over, all the Israelites who were there set off for the towns of Judah to smash the pillar, cut down the sacred trunks and wreck the High places and the altars. So they did throughout Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh and did away with them. Then all the Israelites returned to their towns, each man to his home.

²Hezekiah reestablished the priestly and levitical orders, each man in his proper order according to his duties, whether priest or Levite, whether for burnt offering, peace of-

fering, liturgical service, thanksgiving or praise, within the gates of the camp of Yahweh.³ The king set aside a portion of his own possessions for the morning and evening burnt offerings, and the burnt offerings of sabbath, New Moon, and solemn feast, as laid down in the Law of Yahweh.⁴ He then told the people of Jerusalem to give the priests and the Levites their share so that they might devote themselves to the Law of Yahweh.

⁵As soon as the order had been published, the Israelites gathered in the first fruits of corn, wine, oil, honey, and all agricultural produce, and brought in a generous gift of everything.⁶ The Israelites and Judaeans living in the towns of Judah also brought in the tithe of cattle and sheep, and the tithe of the holy things dedicated to Yahweh their God, piling them up, heap after heap.⁷ They began making these heaps in the third month and finished them in the seventh.

⁸When Hezekiah and his officials saw how much had been given, they praised Yahweh and praised his people Israel.⁹ Hezekiah questioned the priests and the Levites about the heaps,¹⁰ and Azariah, the chief priest, of the family of Zadok, answered him, "Since the contributions were first brought to Yahweh's House, we have had enough to eat and still have plenty left over, for Yahweh has blessed his people; this huge pile is what is left."¹¹ Hezekiah then ordered them to have storerooms prepared in Yahweh's House. They did this,¹² and then brought in the contributions, tithes and consecrated things, to keep them in a safe place. Conaniah the Levite was officer-in-charge of them, with Shimei his brother as his assistant.

¹³Jehiel, Azaziah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismachiah, Mahat, and Benaiah were appointed supervisors under the command of Conaniah and his brother Shimei, by order of King Hezekiah and of Azariah the High Priest.¹⁴ Kore, son of Imnah the Levite, keeper of the eastern gate, was made responsible for the voluntary offerings to God; he provided the portion set aside for Yahweh and the most holy offerings.¹⁵ Under his command he had Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah and Shecaniah, who resided permanently in the towns of the priests to distribute these gifts to their kinsmen great or small according to their orders.

¹⁶In addition to this, there was the organization by related groups of all those men thirty years old or older who went to Yahweh's House, by daily rotation, to perform the ritual duties appropriate to their orders.¹⁷ There was also the organization of priests by families; as also that of Levites twenty years old or older, by duties and orders.¹⁸ There was also the organization of all their families for the

whole assembly, since they were busy with the holy ministry.¹⁹ As regards the priests, the sons of Aaron, who lived in the pasture lands belonging to their towns, or in the towns themselves, appointed men, distributed the food to every male among the priests and also to the inscribed Levites who were enrolled.

²⁰Hezekiah enforced these arrangements throughout Judah. He did what is good and right and loyal before Yahweh his God.²¹ He was successful, because everything he did for the Temple or in observance of the Law, he did as one seeking God with all his heart.

Invasion of Sennacherib

32¹ After Hezekiah had faithfully done all this, Sennacherib king of Assyria invaded Judah. He pitched camp before the fortified towns and gave orders for his army to break their way through the walls.² Hezekiah realized that Sennacherib intended to attack Jerusalem also,³ so he summoned his officers and champions and they decided to cut off the water supply from the springs situated outside the city.⁴ So a large number of people banded together to block all the springs and cut off the watercourse flowing through the fields. They said, "Why should the king of Assyria find plenty of water when he arrives?"⁵ Hezekiah strengthened his defenses: he had the broken parts of the wall repaired, built towers on it, constructed a second wall on the outer side, strengthened the Millo of the City of David and made quantities of spears and shields.⁶ He then appointed generals to command the people, had them assemble in the square by the city gate and spoke as follows to encourage them,⁷ "Be strong and stand firm; be fearless, be confident when you face the king of Assyria and the whole army he brings with him, since he that is with us is stronger than he that is with him."⁸ He has only an arm of flesh, but we have Yahweh our God to help us and fight our battles." The people were encouraged by the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.

⁹Next, Sennacherib king of Assyria, who was then outside Lachish with all his army, sent his servants to Jerusalem, to Hezekiah king of Judah, and to all the Judaeans who were in Jerusalem. They said,¹⁰ "Hear the message from Sennacherib king of Assyria, 'What gives you the confidence to stay in Jerusalem under siege?'¹¹ Is not Hezekiah deceiving you? Is he not condemning you to die of hunger and thirst when he says: Yahweh our God will save us from the king of Assyria?'¹² Is not Hezekiah the very man who has destroyed the High places and the altars of Yahweh, and given the order to Judah and to Jerusalem: Before one altar only are you to worship, and on that alone offer incense?

¹³Do you not know what I have done, I and my ancestors, to all the peoples of other countries? Have the gods of any nation in those countries ever been able to save them from me? ¹⁴Who among all the gods of those nations was able to save his people from me? ¹⁵Do not let Hezekiah deceive you. Do not let him mislead you like this. Do not believe him, for no god of any nation or kingdom has been able to save his people from me or from my ancestors. No more will your god be able to save you from me.”

¹⁶His officials were still speaking against Yahweh God, and his servant Hezekiah, ¹⁷when Sennacherib wrote a letter insulting Yahweh the God of Israel. This is what he said about him, “Just as the gods of the nations in other countries have failed to save their peoples from me, so will the god of Hezekiah fail to save his people.” ¹⁸They shouted this out in the language of Judah, to the people of Jerusalem who were on the city wall, to confuse and frighten them, and so that they might capture the city: ¹⁹they spoke of the God of Jerusalem in the same way they talked of the gods of the peoples of the world, the work of human hands.

²⁰Then King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz prayed and cried out to heaven. ²¹And Yahweh sent an angel who made all the mighty warriors, commanders and officers die in the camp of the king of Assyria. So the emperor went back to Assyria very ashamed. And as he came into the temple of his god, some of his own sons struck him with their swords. ²²So Yahweh saved Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem from the power of Sennacherib king of Assyria and from everyone else, and he gave them peace on every side. ²³Many people brought grain offerings to Yahweh in Jerusalem and gifts for Hezekiah king of Judah; since then all the nations held Hezekiah in honor.

²⁴In those days, Hezekiah fell ill and was at the point of death. He prayed to Yahweh, who heard him and granted him a sign. ²⁵But Hezekiah did not show gratitude for what Yahweh had done for him; his heart grew proud and Judah and Jerusalem suffered for it. ²⁶Finally, however, Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem humbled themselves, and so Yahweh did not punish the people until after Hezekiah’s death. ²⁷Hezekiah enjoyed immense riches and honor. He built himself storerooms for gold, silver, precious stones, spices, gems and every sort of valuable. ²⁸He had storehouses for his returns of corn, wine and oil, buildings for his different sorts of cattle, and sheep runs for his sheep, ²⁹and, further, acquired donkeys and enormous herds and flocks. God had indeed given him very great riches.

³⁰It was Hezekiah who stopped the upper outlet of Gihon Spring and channeled the water down to the west side of the City of David. Hezekiah succeeded in all he undertook. ³¹However, when the authorities in Babylon sent to him to inquire about the extraordinary thing that had taken place in the country, God abandoned him only to test him, and to discover the secrets of his heart.

³²The rest of the history of Hezekiah, and his deed of piety, are recorded in the Vision of the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz and in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. ³³Then Hezekiah rested with his fathers and they buried him on the slope going up to the tombs of the sons of David. At his death, all of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honor. His son Manasseh succeeded him.

Manasseh

33 ¹Manasseh was twelve years old when he came to the throne and he reigned for fifty-five years in Jerusalem. ²He did what was evil in the eyes of Yahweh, and followed the disgusting practices of the nations that Yahweh had removed from the land before giving it to Israel, ³He rebuilt the High places his father Hezekiah had wrecked; he set up altars to the Baals and made sacred trunks. He worshiped the whole array of heaven and served it. ⁴He built altars in Yahweh’s House of which Yahweh had said, “In Jerusalem shall my Name be forever.”

⁵He built altars to the whole array of heaven in the two courts of Yahweh’s House. ⁶He caused his sons to pass through the fire in the Valley of Benhinnom. He practiced soothsaying, magic and witchcraft, and introduced necromancers and wizards. He did many things displeasing to Yahweh, thus provoking his anger. ⁷He placed the idol he had made in the house of which God had said to David and to his son Solomon, “In this house and in Jerusalem, the city I chose out of all the tribes of Israel, I will give my Name a home forever. ⁸I will no longer turn Israel’s footsteps away from the land I assigned to their ancestors, provided they observe all I have ordered them in accordance with the whole Law, the statutes and the ordinances, given through Moses.” ⁹Manasseh led Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem astray, so that they did more evil than those nations Yahweh had destroyed before the Israelites. ¹⁰Yahweh spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention.

¹¹Then Yahweh sent the generals of the king of Assyria against them, who captured Manasseh with hooks, put him in chains and led him away to Babylon. ¹²In his distress he sought to appease Yahweh his God. Humbling himself deeply before the God of his ancestors, he prayed to him, ¹³and God

changed his mind. Hearing his plea he allowed him to come back to Jerusalem and reign again. Manasseh realised then that Yahweh is God. ¹⁴After that he rebuilt the outer wall of the Citadel of David, west of Gihon in the wadi, as far as the Fish Gate; it encircled the Ophel, and he increased its height very considerably. He stationed military governors in all the fortified towns of Judah.

¹⁵He removed the alien gods and the idol from Yahweh's House and all the altars he had built on the mountain of Yahweh's House and in Jerusalem, and threw them out of the city. ¹⁶He rebuilt the altar of Yahweh and offered peace offerings and praise offerings on it, and ordered Judah to serve Yahweh the God of Israel; ¹⁷however, the people continued to sacrifice on the High places, although only to Yahweh their God.

¹⁸The rest of the history of Manasseh, his prayer to God, and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of Yahweh the God of Israel, can be found in the Annals of the Kings of Israel. ¹⁹His prayer and how God heard his prayer, all his sins, his unfaithfulness, the sites where he built High places and set up sacred trunks and idols before he humbled himself are recorded in the Annals of Hozai. ²⁰Then Manasseh rested with his ancestors and was buried in his palace. His son Amon succeeded him.

²¹Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king and he reigned for two years in Jerusalem. ²²He did what is displeasing to Yahweh, as Manasseh his father had done. Amon offered sacrifice and worship to all the idols Manasseh his father had made, ²³but he did not humble himself before Yahweh like Manasseh his father had done; instead he made the guilt of Judah worse. ²⁴His officers plotted against him and killed him in his palace. ²⁵But the people of the nation struck down all those who had plotted against King Amon and proclaimed his son Josiah as his successor.

Josiah

34 ¹Josiah was eight years old when he became king and he reigned for thirty-one years in Jerusalem. ²He did what is pleasing to Yahweh, and walked in the ways of his father David, without turning aside.

³In the eighth year of his reign, when he was still a youth, he began to seek the God of his father David. In the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the High places, the sacred trunks and the molten idols. ⁴He looked on while they smashed the altars of Baal, and he himself tore down the incense altars near them. He reduced to dust the symbols of Asherah and the other idols and then threw the dust over the graves of

those who had sacrificed to them. ⁵He burned the bones of their priests on their altars, and so purified Judah and Jerusalem. ⁶He did the same in the towns of Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon, and as far as Naphtali, and in the devastated areas around them. ⁷There too he destroyed the altars and symbols of the goddess, smashed the sacred trunks and the idols and ground them to powder, and tore down all the altars of incense throughout the land of Israel. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

⁸In the eighteenth year of his reign, with the object of purifying land and Temple, he sent Shaphan son of Azaliah, Maaseiah governor of the city and the herald Joah son of Joahaz, to repair the house of Yahweh his God. ⁹These men went to the high priest Hilkiah and handed over to him the money that had been brought to the house of God. The Levite gatekeepers had collected this money from Manasseh, Ephraim and all the rest of Israel, and from all the Judaeans and Benjaminites and from the people living in Jerusalem. ¹⁰They handed it over to the masters of works of Yahweh's House and these men used it for the repair and restoration of the House. ¹¹They gave it to the carpenters and builders for buying the stones and timber for the beams and framework of the buildings which the kings of Judah had let go to ruin.

¹²The men worked conscientiously. Over them were set Jahath and Obadiah, Levites of the sons of Merari; together with Zechariah and Meshullam of the sons of Kohath, as supervisors. These Levites were all skilled liturgical musicians; ¹³but they also directed the carriers and the masters of works of the various jobs. Other Levites were scribes, clerks and gatekeepers.

The book of the law discovered

¹⁴When they were taking out the money that had been brought to Yahweh's House, Hilkiah the high priest found the book of the Law given through Moses. ¹⁵At once Hilkiah told Shaphan the secretary, "I have found the book of the Law in Yahweh's House." And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan. ¹⁶Shaphan took the book to the king, and reported to him, "Your servants are carrying out the commands you gave them: ¹⁷they have melted down the silver which was in Yahweh's House and have handed it over to the supervisors and masters of works." ¹⁸After which Shaphan the secretary informed the king, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book"; and Shaphan read from it in the king's presence.

¹⁹When the king heard the book being read, he tore his garments, ²⁰and gave the following order to Hilkiah, Ahikam son of

Shaphan, Abdon son of Micah, Shaphan the secretary and Asaiah the king's minister, ²¹ "Go and consult Yahweh, for me and for the people who still remain in Israel and Judah, about the words of the book that has been found. Great indeed must be the anger of Yahweh to be poured down on us because our ancestors did not observe the word of Yahweh nor do according to what is written in this book."

²² Hilkiah and the king's men went to Huldah the prophetess, wife of Shallum son of Tokhath, son of Hasrah, the keeper of the Temple robes; she lived in Jerusalem in the new town. They spoke to her about this, ²³ and she answered, "This is the word of Yahweh for the man who sent you to me: ²⁴ I am going to punish Jerusalem and all its people, carrying out all the curses written in the book that has been read in the presence of the king of Judah, ²⁵ because they have abandoned me and have burned incense to other gods, stirring up my anger by everything they have done. Because of this my anger is aroused against Jerusalem, and it will not die down.

²⁶ And you will tell the king of Judah who sent you to consult Yahweh, that thus answers Yahweh, the God of Israel, regarding the words you have heard: ²⁷ Since your heart has been touched and you have humbled yourself before God on hearing what he has threatened against Jerusalem and those who live in it, since you have humbled yourself before me and torn your garments and wept before me, I for my part have heard – this is Yahweh's word. ²⁸ The punishment which I am going to bring on Jerusalem will not come until after your death. I will let you die in peace." They took this answer to the king.

²⁹ The king then had all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem summoned, ³⁰ and the king went up to Yahweh's House, with all the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, priests, Levites and all the people, great and small alike. In their hearing he read out everything that was said in the book of the covenant found in Yahweh's House. ³¹ The king stood beside the pillar, and in the presence of Yahweh he made a covenant to follow Yahweh and to keep his laws and commands with all his heart and soul, as written in that book. ³² He committed everyone there in Jerusalem or in Benjamin to obey the requirements of the covenant of God, the God of their ancestors. ³³ Josiah removed all the disgusting idols throughout the territories belonging to the people of Israel. For the rest of his life he made sure that every member of Israel served their God. They did not fail to follow Yahweh, the God of their ancestors.

The Passover of Josiah

35 ¹ Josiah then celebrated a Passover in honor of Yahweh in Jerusalem and they killed the passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the first month. ² He appointed certain functions to the priests and let them discharge the duties of Yahweh's House. ³ Then he said to the Levites, who were to instruct all Israel and who were consecrated to Yahweh, "The holy ark has been put in the house built by Solomon son of David, king of Israel, and it is no longer a burden for your shoulders. So you shall serve Yahweh your God and Israel your people in this way. ⁴ Stand in the holy place by families and orders, according to the written decree of David king of Israel and his son Solomon, ⁵ and let some be available to help each family of the people of Israel; for the Levites are to have a portion in each family. ⁶ Kill the animals for the festival, sanctify yourselves, and be at the disposal of your brothers in acting in accordance with the word of Yahweh which was spoken through Moses."

⁷ Josiah then provided for the use of the people, lambs and kids from the flocks to the number of thirty thousand, all as Passover offerings for all who were present, and three thousand bulls as well; all these animals came from the king's possessions. ⁸ His officials, for their part, made provision for what the people, the priests and the Levites would use. The senior officials of the house of God, Hilkiah, Zechariah and Jehiel, also gave the priests two thousand six hundred lambs and kids and three hundred bulls as Passover victims. ⁹ The heads of the Levites, Conaniah, Shemaiah and his brothers Nathanel, Hashabiah, Jeiel and Jozabad, provided five thousand lambs and kids and five hundred bulls as Passover victims for the Levites.

¹⁰ When everything for the Passover had been prepared, the priests took their posts, and the Levites also in their orders as commanded by the king. ¹¹ They killed the lambs and goats, and while the priests sprinkled the blood they received, the Levites cut up the victims. ¹² They put aside the animals for the burnt offering and distributed to family groupings of the lay people, giving to each his offering to Yahweh, as is written in the Book of Moses; they did the same with the bulls. ¹³ They roasted the passover, as ordained, and boiled the sacred foods in pots, dishes, and pans, carrying them speedily to the people. ¹⁴ Afterward they prepared the passover for themselves and for the priests. Because the priests, the sons of Aaron, had been busy till nightfall offering the burnt offering and the fatty parts, the Levites prepared the passover for themselves and for the priests, the sons of Aaron. ¹⁵ The musicians, the sons of Asaph, were at their places, in

accordance with the ordinances of David; neither Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun the king's prophet, nor the keepers of each gate had to leave their duties, since their brothers the Levites made all the preparations for them.

¹⁶So the whole service of Yahweh was prepared that day to celebrate the Passover and to offer burnt offerings on the altar of Yahweh, in accordance with the ordinances of King Josiah.

¹⁷The Israelites who were present celebrated the Passover and, for seven days, the feast of Unleavened Bread. ¹⁸No Passover like this one had ever been celebrated in Israel since the days of the prophet Samuel; no king of Israel had ever celebrated a Passover like the one celebrated by Josiah with the priests, the Levites, all of Judah and of Israel who were present, and the people of Jerusalem.

The tragic end of the reign

¹⁹This Passover was celebrated in the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah. ²⁰After all this, when Josiah had already repaired the House, Neco king of Egypt came up to fight at Carchemish on the Euphrates and Josiah marched out to stop him. ²¹Neco sent him messengers to say, "There is no quarrel between me and you, king of Judah. I have not come today to attack you, but to fight my enemies, and God has told me to hurry. Do not oppose God who is with me, lest he destroy you."

²²But Josiah continued to challenge him for he was determined to fight him, and would not listen to what God was saying through Neco. So he went out to fight in the plain of Megiddo. ²³Egyptian arrows struck King Josiah, and the king said to his followers, "Take me away; I am badly wounded." ²⁴His servants lifted him out of his own chariot, transferred him to another one and took him back to Jerusalem, where he died. He was buried in the tombs of his ancestors. All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. ²⁵Jeremiah composed a lament for Josiah which all the women singers use when speaking of Josiah in their laments to this day; this has become a custom in Israel; the song is found in the collection of laments.

²⁶The rest of the history of Josiah and all his good deeds according to the Law, ²⁹and his acts from the first to last, are recorded in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah.

The last kings

36 ¹The people of the nation took Jehoahaz, son of Josiah and made him king in Jerusalem in succession to his father. ²Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king and he reigned for three months in Jerusalem. ³The king of

Egypt took him prisoner and made the people of Judah pay 7,500 pounds of silver and 75 pounds of gold as tribute. ⁴The king of Egypt then made Eliakim, brother of Jehoahaz, king of Judah and Jerusalem, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. Neco took his brother Jehoahaz to Egypt.

⁵Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king and he reigned for eleven years in Jerusalem. He did what was evil in the eyes of Yahweh his God. ⁶Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon attacked him, put him in chains and carried him off to Babylon. ⁷Nebuchadnezzar also carried off to Babylon some of the treasures of the House and put them in his palace at Babylon. ⁸The rest of the history of Jehoiakim, the disgusting things he did and those discovered to his discredit, these are recorded in the Book of Kings of Israel and Judah. His son Jehoiakim succeeded him.

⁹Jehoiakim was eight years old when he became King and he reigned for three months and ten days in Jerusalem. He did what was evil in the eyes of Yahweh. ¹⁰When spring came, King Nebuchadnezzar sent for him and had him taken to Babylon as a prisoner, with the treasures of the temple and made Zedekiah, his brother, king of Judah and Jerusalem in his place.

¹¹Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king and he reigned for eleven years in Jerusalem. ¹²He did what was evil in the eyes of Yahweh his God. He did not listen humbly to the prophet Jeremiah, accredited by Yahweh himself. ¹³He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar who had forced him to swear in God's name that he would be loyal. He became stubborn, and obstinately refused to return to Yahweh the God of Israel.

Conclusion

¹⁴Furthermore, all the heads of the priesthood, and the people, too, were exceedingly unfaithful, following the disgusting example of the nations around them, and so they defiled the house which Yahweh himself had made holy. ¹⁵Yahweh, the God of their ancestors, continued to send prophets to warn his people, since he had compassion on them and on his dwelling place. ¹⁶But they mocked the messengers of God, ignored his words, and laughed at his prophets, until at last the anger of Yahweh rose so high against his people that there was no further remedy.

¹⁷Then he brought against them the king of the Chaldeans who killed with the sword the young men of Judah even in the House; he spared neither youth nor virgin, neither old man nor aged cripple: God handed them all over to him. ¹⁸All the furnishings of the house of God, large and small, the treasures of

Yahweh's House, the treasures of the king and his officials, he carried off to Babylon.

¹⁹They burned down the house of God, broke down the walls of Jerusalem, set fire to all its palaces, and destroyed everything of value in it. ²⁰The survivors were deported by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon; they were to serve him and his descendants as slaves until the kingdom of Persia came to power. ²¹This is how the work of Yahweh was fulfilled that he spoke through Jeremiah, "The land will lie desolate for seventy years, to make up for its Sabbath rests that have not been observed."

²²And in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, to fulfill what he had said through the prophet Jeremiah, Yahweh stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia to issue the following command and send it out in writing to be read aloud everywhere in his kingdom: ²³"Thus speaks Cyrus king of Persia: Yahweh, the God of heaven, who has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, has ordered me to build him a house in Jerusalem, in Judah. Now, all of you who belong to his people, go there and may Yahweh your God be with you."