

THE SECOND BOOK OF THE CHRONICLES

The reign of Solomon and dedication of the temple

1¹KING SOLOMON, DAVID'S SON, strengthened his hold on the kingdom, for the LORD his God was with him and made him very great.

²Solomon spoke to all Israel, to the officers over units of a thousand and of a hundred, the judges and all the leading men of Israel, the heads of families; ³and he, together with all the assembled people, went to the hill-shrine at Gibeon; for the Tent of God's Presence, which Moses the LORD's servant had made in the wilderness, was there. ⁴(But David had brought up the Ark of God from Kiriath-jearim to the place which he had prepared for it, for he had pitched a tent for it in Jerusalem.) ⁵The altar of bronze also, which Bezalel son of Uri, son of Hur, had made, was there in front of the Tabernacle of the LORD; and Solomon and the assembly resorted to it [resorted to it: *or worshipped him*]. ⁶There Solomon went up to the altar of bronze before the LORD in the Tent of the Presence and offered on it a thousand whole-offerings. ⁷ [vv7-12: cp1Kgs. 3.5-14] That night God appeared to Solomon and said, 'What shall I give you? Tell me.' ⁸Solomon answered, 'Thou didst show great and constant love to David my father and thou hast made me king in his place. ⁹Now, O LORD God, let thy word to David my father be confirmed, for thou hast made me king over a people as numerous as the dust on the earth. ¹⁰Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people; for who is fit to govern this great people of thine?' ¹¹God answered Solomon, 'Because this is what you desire, because you have not asked for wealth or possessions or honour [*Or riches*] or the lives of your enemies or even long life for yourself, but have asked for wisdom and knowledge to govern my people over whom I have made you king, ¹²wisdom and knowledge are given to you; I shall also give you wealth and possessions and honour [*Or riches*] such as no king has had before you and none shall have after you.' ¹³Then Solomon returned from the hill-shrine at Gibeon, from before the Tent of the Presence, to Jerusalem and ruled over Israel.

¹⁴ [vv14-17: cp9.25-28; 1Kgs. 10.26-29] Solomon got together many chariots and horses; he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses, and he stabled some in the chariot-towns and kept others at hand in Jerusalem. ¹⁵The king made silver and gold as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as plentiful as sycomore-fig in the Shephelah. ¹⁶Horses were imported from Egypt and Coa for Solomon; the royal merchants obtained them from Coa by purchase. ¹⁷Chariots were imported from Egypt for six hundred silver shekels each, and horses for a hundred and fifty; in the same way the merchants obtained them for export from all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Aram.

2¹Solomon resolved to build a house in honour of the name of the LORD, and a royal palace for himself. ²He engaged seventy thousand hauliers and eighty thousand quarrymen, and three thousand six hundred men to superintend them. ³ [vv3-16: cp1Kgs. 5.2-11] Then Solomon sent this message to Hiram king of Tyre: 'You were so good as to

send my father David cedar-wood to build his royal residence. ⁴Now I am about to build a house in honour of the name of the LORD my God and to consecrate it to him, so that I may burn fragrant incense in it before him, and present the rows of the Bread of the Presence regularly, and whole-offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths and the new moons and the appointed festivals of the LORD our God; for this is a duty laid upon Israel for ever. ⁵The house I am about to build will be a great house, because our God is greater than all gods. ⁶But who is able to build him a house when heaven itself, the highest heaven, cannot contain him? And who am I that I should build him a house, except that I may burn sacrifices before him? ⁷Send me then a skilled craftsman, a man able to work in gold and silver, copper [*Or bronze*] and iron, and in purple, crimson, and violet yarn, who is also an expert engraver and will work with my skilled workmen in Judah and in Jerusalem who were provided by David my father. ⁸Send me also cedar, pine, and algum timber from Lebanon, for I know that your men are expert at felling the trees of Lebanon; my men will work with yours ⁹to get an ample supply of timber ready for me, for the house which I shall build will be great and wonderful. ¹⁰I will supply provisions for your servants, the woodmen who fell the trees: twenty thousand kor of wheat and twenty thousand kor of barley, with twenty thousand bath of wine and twenty thousand bath of oil.'

¹¹Huram king of Tyre sent this answer by letter to Solomon: 'It is because of the love which the LORD has for his people that he has made you king over them.' ¹²The letter went on to say, 'Blessed is the LORD the God of Israel, maker of heaven and earth, who has given to King David a wise son, endowed with intelligence and understanding, to build a house for the LORD and a royal palace for himself. ¹³I now send you a skilful and experienced craftsman, master Hiram. ¹⁴He is the son of a Danite woman, his father a Tyrian; he is an experienced worker in gold and silver, copper [*Or bronze*] and iron, stone and wood, as well as in purple, violet, and crimson yarn, and in fine linen; he is also a trained engraver who will be able to work with your own skilled craftsmen and those of my lord David your father, to any design submitted to him. ¹⁵Now then, let my lord send his servants the wheat and the barley, the oil and the wine, which he promised; ¹⁶we will fell all the timber in Lebanon that you need and float it as rafts to the roadstead at Joppa, and you will convey it from there up to Jerusalem.'

¹⁷Solomon took a census of all the aliens resident in Israel, similar to the census which David his father had taken; these were found to be a hundred and fifty-three thousand six hundred. ¹⁸He made seventy thousand of them hauliers and eighty thousand quarrymen, and three thousand six hundred superintendents to make the people work.

3¹Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to his father David, on the site which David had prepared on the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite. ² [*vv2-4: cp 1Kgs. 6.1-3*] He began to build in the second month of the fourth year of his reign. ³These are the foundations which Solomon laid for building the house of God: the length, according to the old standard of measurement, was sixty cubits and the breadth twenty. ⁴The vestibule in front of the house [*house: prob. rdg, Heb length*] was twenty cubits long, spanning the whole breadth of the house, and its height was twenty; on the inside he overlaid it with pure gold. ⁵He panelled the large chamber with pine, covered it with fine gold and carved on

it palm-trees and chain-work. ⁶He adorned the house with precious stones for decoration, and the gold he used was from Parvaim. ⁷He covered the whole house with gold, its rafters and frames, its walls and doors; and he carved cherubim on the walls.

⁸He made the Most Holy Place twenty cubits long, corresponding to the breadth of the house, and twenty cubits broad. He covered it all with six hundred talents of fine gold, ⁹and the weight of the nails was fifty shekels of gold. He also covered the upper chambers with gold.

¹⁰ [vv10-13: cp 1Kgs. 6.23-28] In the Most Holy Place he carved two images of cherubim and overlaid them with gold. ¹¹The total span of the wings of the cherubim was twenty cubits. A wing of the one cherub extended five cubits to reach the wall of the house, while its other wing reached out five cubits to meet a wing of the other cherub. ¹²Similarly, a wing of the second cherub extended five cubits to reach the other wall of the house, while its other wing met a wing of the first cherub. ¹³The wings of these cherubim extended twenty cubits; they stood with their feet on the ground, facing the outer chamber. ¹⁴He made the Veil of violet, purple, and crimson yarn, and fine linen, and embroidered cherubim on it.

¹⁵ [vv15-17: cp 1Kgs. 7.15-21] In front of the house he erected two pillars eighteen cubits high, with an architrave five cubits high on top of each. ¹⁶He made chain-work like a necklace [necklace: *prob. rdg, Heb obscure*] and set it round the tops of the pillars, and he carved a hundred pomegranates and set them in the chain-work. ¹⁷He erected the two pillars in front of the temple, one on the right and one on the left; the one on the right he named Jachin [*Or Jachun, meaning It shall stand*] and the one on the left Boaz [*Or Booz, meaning In strength*].

⁴¹He then made an altar of bronze, twenty cubits long, twenty cubits broad, and ten cubits high. ² [vv2- 5: cp 1Kgs. 7.23-26] He also made the Sea of cast metal; it was round in shape, the diameter from rim to rim being ten cubits; it stood five cubits high, and it took a line thirty cubits long to go round it. ³Under the Sea, on every side, completely surrounding the thirty [*prob. rdg, Heb ten*] cubits of its circumference, were what looked like gourds [*prob. rdg, cp 1Kgs. 7.24; Heb oxen*], two rows of them, cast in one piece with the Sea itself. ⁴It was mounted on twelve oxen, three facing north, three west, three south, and three east, their hind quarters turned inwards; the Sea rested on top of them. ⁵Its thickness was a hand-breadth; its rim was made like that of a cup, shaped like the calyx of a lily; when full it held three thousand bath. ⁶He also made ten basins for washing, setting five on the left side and five on the right; in these they rinsed everything used for the whole-offering. The Sea was made for the priests to wash in.

⁷He made ten golden lamp-stands in the prescribed manner and set them in the temple, five on the right side and five on the left. ⁸He also made ten tables and placed them in the temple, five on the right and five on the left; and he made a hundred golden tossing-bowls. ⁹He made the court of the priests and the great precinct and the doors for it, and overlaid the doors of both with copper; ¹⁰he put the Sea at the right side, at the south-east corner of the temple.

11 [vv4.11-5.1: cp 1Kgs. 7.40-51] Hiram made the pots, the shovels, and the tossing-bowls. So he finished the work which he had undertaken for King Solomon on the house of God. ¹²The two pillars; the two bowl-shaped capitals [bowl-shaped capitals: *prob. rdg, cp 1Kgs. 7.41; Heb the bowls and the capitals*] on the tops of the pillars; the two ornamental networks to cover the two bowl-shaped capitals on the tops of the pillars; ¹³the four hundred pomegranates for the two networks, two rows of pomegranates for each network, to cover the two bowl-shaped capitals on the two [two: *prob. rdg, cp 1Kgs. 7.42; Heb surface of the*] pillars; ¹⁴the ten [the ten: *prob. rdg, cp 1Kgs. 7.43; Heb he made the*] trolleys and the ten [the ten: *prob. rdg, cp 1Kgs. 7.43; Heb he made the*] basins on the trolleys; ¹⁵the one Sea and the twelve oxen which supported it; ¹⁶the pots, the shovels, and the tossing-bowls [tossing-bowls: *prob. rdg, cp 1Kgs. 7.45; Heb forks*] – all these [*prob. rdg, cp 1Kgs. 7.45; Heb their*] objects master Hiram made of bronze, burnished work for King Solomon for the house of the LORD. ¹⁷In the Plain of the Jordan the king cast them, in the foundry between Succoth and Zeredah. ¹⁸Solomon made great quantities of all these objects; the weight of the copper [*Or bronze*] used was beyond reckoning.

¹⁹Solomon made also all the furnishings for the house of God: the golden altar, the tables upon which was set the Bread of the Presence, ²⁰the lamp-stands of red gold whose lamps burned before the inner shrine in the prescribed manner, ²¹the flowers and lamps and tongs of solid gold, ²²the snuffers, tossing-bowls, saucers, and firepans of red gold, and, at the entrance to the house, the inner doors leading to the Most Holy Place and those leading to the sanctuary, of gold.

5¹When all the work which Solomon did for the house of the LORD was completed, he brought in the sacred treasures of his father David, the silver, the gold, and the vessels, and deposited them in the storehouses of the house of God.

2 [vv2-10: cp 1Kgs. 8.1-9] THEN SOLOMON SUMMONED THE ELDERS of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes who were chiefs of families in Israel, to assemble in Jerusalem, in order to bring up the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD from the City of David, which is called Zion. ³All the men of Israel assembled in the king's presence at the pilgrim-feast in the seventh month. ⁴When the elders of Israel had all come, the Levites took the Ark ⁵and carried it up with the Tent of the Presence and all the sacred furnishings of the Tent: it was the priests and the Levites together who carried them up. ⁶King Solomon and the whole congregation of Israel, assembled with him before the Ark, sacrificed sheep and oxen in numbers past counting or reckoning. ⁷Then the priests brought in the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD to its place, the inner shrine of the house, the Most Holy Place, beneath the wings of the cherubim. ⁸The cherubim spread their wings over the place of the Ark, and formed a covering above the Ark and its poles. ⁹The poles projected, and their ends could be seen from the Holy Place immediately in front of the inner shrine, but from nowhere else outside; they are there to this day. ¹⁰There was nothing inside the Ark but the two tablets which Moses had put there at Horeb, the tablets of the covenant [the tablets of the covenant: *prob. rdg, cp 1Kgs. 8.9; Heb omitted*] which the LORD made with the Israelites when they left Egypt.

¹¹Now when the priests came out of the Holy Place (for all the priests who were present

had hallowed themselves without keeping to their divisions), ¹²all the levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, their sons and their kinsmen, clothed in fine linen, stood with cymbals, lutes, and harps, to the east of the altar, together with a hundred and twenty priests who blew trumpets. ¹³Now the trumpeters and the singers joined in unison to sound forth praise and thanksgiving to the LORD, and the song was raised with trumpets, cymbals, and musical instruments, in praise of the LORD, because 'that [*Or he*] is good, for his love endures for ever'; and the house was filled with the cloud of the glory of the LORD. ¹⁴The priests could not continue to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God. **6**¹ [*vv1-39: cp 1Kgs. 8.12-50*] Then Solomon said:

O LORD who hast chosen to dwell in thick darkness,
²here have I built thee a lofty house,
a habitation for thee to occupy for ever.

³And as they stood waiting, the king turned round and blessed all the assembly of Israel ⁴in these words: 'Blessed be the LORD the God of Israel who spoke directly to my father David and has himself fulfilled his promise. For he said, ⁵"From the day when I brought my people out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel where I should build a house for my Name to be there, nor did I choose any man to be prince over my people Israel. ⁶But I chose Jerusalem for my Name to be there, and I chose David to be over my people Israel." ⁷My father David had in mind to build a house in honour of the name of the LORD the God of Israel, ⁸but the LORD said to him, "You purposed to build a house in honour of my name; and your purpose was good. ⁹Nevertheless, you shall not build it; but the son who is to be born to you, he shall build the house in honour of my name." ¹⁰The LORD has now fulfilled his promise: I have succeeded my father David and taken his place on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised; and I have built the house in honour of the name of the LORD the God of Israel. ¹¹I have installed there the Ark containing the covenant of the LORD which he made with Israel.'

¹²Then Solomon, standing in front of the altar of the LORD, in the presence of the whole assembly of Israel, spread out his hands. ¹³He had made a bronze [*Or copper*] platform, five cubits long, five cubits broad, and three cubits high, and had placed it in the centre of the precinct. He mounted it and knelt down in the presence of the assembly, and, spreading out his hands towards heaven, ¹⁴he said, 'O LORD God of Israel, there is no god like thee in heaven or on earth, keeping covenant with thy servants and showing them constant love while they continue faithful to thee in heart and soul. ¹⁵Thou hast kept thy promise to thy servant David my father; by thy deeds this day thou hast fulfilled what thou didst say to him in words. ¹⁶Now, therefore, O LORD God of Israel, keep this promise of thine to thy servant David my father: "You shall never want for a man appointed by me to sit on the throne of Israel, if only your sons look to their ways and conform to my law, as you have done in my sight." ¹⁷And now, O LORD God of Israel, let the word which thou didst speak to thy servant David be confirmed.

¹⁸But can God indeed dwell with man on the earth? Heaven itself, the highest heaven, cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have built! ¹⁹Yet attend to the prayer and the supplication of thy servant, O LORD my God; listen to the cry and the prayer which thy servant utters before thee, ²⁰that thine eyes may ever be upon this

house day and night, this place of which thou didst say, "It shall receive my Name"; so mayest thou hear thy servant when he prays towards this place. ²¹Hear thou the supplications of thy servant and of thy people Israel when they pray towards this place. Hear from heaven thy dwelling and, when thou hearest, forgive.

²²When a man wrongs his neighbour and he is adjured to take an oath, and the adjuration is made before thy altar in this house, ²³then do thou hear from heaven and act: be thou thy servants' judge, requiting the guilty man and bringing his deeds upon his own head, acquitting the innocent and rewarding him as his innocence may deserve.

²⁴When thy people Israel are defeated by an enemy because they have sinned against thee, and they turn back to thee, confessing thy name and making their prayer and supplication before thee in this house, ²⁵do thou hear from heaven; forgive the sin of thy people Israel and restore them to the land which thou gavest to them and to their forefathers.

²⁶When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain, because thy servant and thy people Israel have sinned against thee, and when they pray towards this place, confessing thy name and forsaking their sin when they feel thy punishment, ²⁷do thou hear in heaven and forgive their sin; so mayest thou teach them the good way which they should follow, and grant rain to thy land which thou hast given to thy people as their own possession.

²⁸If there is famine in the land, or pestilence, or black blight or red, or locusts new-sloughed or fully grown, or if their enemies besiege them in any [in any: *prob. rdg, Heb in the land*] of their cities, or if plague or sickness befall them, ²⁹then hear the prayer or supplication of every man among thy people Israel, as each one, prompted by his own suffering and misery, spreads out his hands towards this house; ³⁰hear it from heaven thy dwelling and forgive. And, as thou knowest a man's heart, reward him according to his deeds, for thou alone knowest the hearts of all men; ³¹and so they will fear and obey thee all their lives in the land thou gavest to our forefathers.

³²The foreigner too, the man who does not belong to thy people Israel, but has come from a distant land because of thy great fame and thy strong hand and arm outstretched, when he comes and prays towards this house, ³³hear from heaven thy dwelling and respond to the call which the foreigner makes to thee, so that like thy people Israel all peoples of the earth may know thy fame and fear thee, and learn that this house which I have built bears thy name.

³⁴When thy people go to war with their enemies, wherever thou dost send them, and they pray to thee, turning towards this city which thou hast chosen and towards this house which I have built in honour of thy name, ³⁵do thou from heaven hear their prayer and supplication, and grant them justice.

³⁶Should they sin against thee (and what man is free from sin?) and shouldst thou in thy anger give them over to an enemy, who carries them captive to a land far or near; ³⁷if in the land of their captivity they learn their lesson and turn back and make supplication to thee in that land and say, "We have sinned and acted perversely and

wickedly”, ³⁸if they turn back to thee with heart and soul in the land of their captivity to which they have been taken, and pray, turning towards their land which thou gavest to their forefathers and towards this city which thou didst choose and this house which I have built in honour of thy name; ³⁹then from heaven thy dwelling do thou hear their prayer and supplications and grant them justice. Forgive thy people their sins against thee. ⁴⁰Now, O my God, let thine eyes be open and thy ears attentive to the prayer made in this place. ⁴¹Arise now, O LORD God, and come to thy place of rest, thou and the Ark of thy might. Let thy priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation and thy saints rejoice in prosperity. ⁴²O LORD God, reject not thy anointed prince; remember thy servant David’s loyal service.’ [thy servant ... service: *or* thy constant love for David thy servant]

7¹When Solomon had finished this prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the whole-offering and the sacrifices, while the glory of the LORD filled the house. ²The priests were unable to enter the house of the LORD because the glory of the LORD had filled it. ³All the Israelites were watching as the fire came down with the glory of the LORD on the house, and where they stood on the paved court they bowed low to the ground and worshipped and gave thanks to the LORD, because ‘that [*Or* he] is good, for his love endures for ever.’

⁴Then the king and all the people offered sacrifice before the LORD. ⁵King Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty-two thousand oxen and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep; in this way the king and all the people dedicated the house of God. ⁶The priests stood at their appointed posts; so too the Levites with their musical instruments for the LORD’s service, which King David had made for giving thanks to the LORD – ‘for his love endures for ever’ – whenever he rendered praise with their help; opposite them, the priests sounded their trumpets; and all the Israelites were standing there.

⁷ [*vv7-22: cp 1Kgs. 8.64-9.9*] Then Solomon consecrated the centre of the court which lay in front [*Or* to the east] of the house of the LORD; there he offered the whole-offerings and the fat portions of the shared-offerings, because the bronze altar which he had made could not take the whole-offering, the grain-offering, and the fat portions. ⁸So Solomon and all Israel with him, a very great assembly from Lebo-hamath to the Torrent of Egypt, celebrated the pilgrim-feast at that time for seven days. ⁹On the eighth day they held a closing ceremony; for they had celebrated the dedication of the altar for seven days; the pilgrim-feast lasted seven days. ¹⁰On the twenty-third day of the seventh month he sent the people to their homes, happy and glad at heart for all the prosperity granted by the LORD to David and Solomon and to his people Israel.

¹¹When Solomon had finished the house of the LORD and the royal palace and had successfully carried out all that he had planned for the house of the LORD and the palace, ¹²the LORD appeared to him by night and said, ‘I have heard your prayer and I have chosen this place to be my place of sacrifice. ¹³When I shut up the heavens and there is no rain, or command the locusts to consume the land, or send a pestilence against my people, ¹⁴if my people whom I have named my own submit and pray to me and seek me and turn back from their evil ways, I will hear from heaven and forgive their sins and heal their land. ¹⁵Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers which are made in this place. ¹⁶I have chosen and consecrated this house, that

my Name may be there for all time and my eyes and my heart be fixed on it for ever. ¹⁷And if you, on your part, live in my sight as your father David lived, doing all I command you, and observing my statutes and my judgements, ¹⁸then I will establish your royal throne, as I promised by a covenant granted to your father David when I said, "You shall never want for a man to rule over Israel." ¹⁹But if you turn away and forsake my statutes and my commandments which I have set before you, and if you go and serve other gods and prostrate yourselves before them, ²⁰then I will uproot you from my land which I gave you, I will reject this house which I have consecrated in honour of my name, and make it a byword and an object-lesson among all peoples. ²¹And this house will become a ruin; every passer-by will be appalled at the sight of it, and they will ask, "Why has the LORD so treated this land and this house?" ²²The answer will be, "Because they forsook the LORD the God of their fathers, who brought them out of Egypt, and clung to other gods, prostrating themselves before them and serving them; that is why the LORD has brought this great evil on them." ' "

8¹ [*vv1-18: cp 1Kgs. 9.10-28*] Solomon had taken twenty years to build the house of the LORD and his own palace, ²and he rebuilt the cities which Hiram had given him and settled Israelites in them. ³He went to Hamath-zobah and seized it, ⁴and rebuilt Tadmor in the wilderness and all the store-cities which he had built in Hamath. ⁵He also built Upper Beth-horon and Lower Beth-horon as fortified cities with walls and barred gates ⁶and Baalath, as well as all his store-cities, and all the towns where he quartered his chariots and horses; and he carried out all his cherished plans for building in Jerusalem, in the Lebanon, and throughout his whole dominion, ⁷All the survivors of the Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, who did not belong to Israel – ⁸that is their descendants who survived in the land, wherever the Israelites had been unable to exterminate them – were employed by Solomon on forced labour, as they still are. ⁹He put none of the Israelites to forced labour for his public works; they were his fighting men, his captains and lieutenants, and the commanders of his chariots and of his cavalry. ¹⁰These were King Solomon's officers, two hundred and fifty of them, in charge of the foremen who superintended the people.

¹¹Solomon brought Pharaoh's daughter up from the City of David to the house he had built for her, for he said, 'No wife of mine shall live in the house of David king of Israel, because this place which the Ark of the LORD has entered is [*this place which ... is: prob. rdg, Heb those which ... are*] holy.'

¹²Then Solomon offered whole-offerings to the LORD on the altar which he had built to the east of the vestibule, ¹³according to what was required for each day, making offerings according to the law of Moses for the sabbaths, the new moons, and the three annual appointed feasts – the pilgrim-feasts of Unleavened Bread, of Weeks, and of Tabernacles [*Or Booths*] ¹⁴Following the practice of his father David, he drew up the roster of service for the priests and that for the Levites for leading the praise and for waiting upon the priests, as each day required, and that for the door-keepers at each gate; for such was the instruction which David the man of God had given. ¹⁵The instructions which David had given concerning the priests and the Levites and concerning the treasuries were not forgotten.

¹⁶By this time all Solomon's work was achieved, from the foundation of the house of the LORD to its completion; the house of the LORD was perfect. ¹⁷Then Solomon went to Ezion-geber and to Eloth on the coast of Edom, ¹⁸and Hiram sent ships under the command of his own officers and manned by crews of experienced seamen; and these, in company with Solomon's servants, went to Ophir and brought back four hundred and fifty talents of gold, which they delivered to King Solomon.

9¹ [*vv1-24: cp 1Kgs. 10.1-25*] THE QUEEN OF SHEBA HEARD of Solomon's fame and came to test him with hard questions. She arrived in Jerusalem with a very large retinue, camels laden with spices, gold in abundance, and precious stones. When she came to Solomon, she told him everything she had in her mind, ²and Solomon answered all her questions; not one of them was too abstruse for him to answer. ³When the queen of Sheba saw the wisdom of Solomon, the house which he had built, ⁴the food on his table, the courtiers sitting round him, his attendants and his cupbearers in their livery standing behind, and the stairs by which he went up to the house of the LORD, there was no more spirit left in her. ⁵Then she said to the king, 'The report which I heard in my own country about you and your wisdom was true, ⁶but I did not believe what they told me until I came and saw for myself. Indeed, I was not told half of the greatness of your wisdom; you surpass the report which I had of you. ⁷Happy are your wives, happy these courtiers of yours who wait on you every day and hear your wisdom! ⁸Blessed be the LORD your God who has delighted in you and has set you on his throne as his king; because in his love your God has elected Israel to make it endure for ever, he has made you king over it to maintain law and justice.' ⁹Then she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, spices in great abundance, and precious stones. There had never been any spices to equal those which the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

¹⁰Besides all this, the servants of Hiram and of Solomon, who had brought gold from Ophir, brought also cargoes of algum wood and precious stones. ¹¹The king used the wood to make stands for the house of the LORD and for the royal palace, as well as harps and lutes for the singers. The like of them had never before been seen in the land of Judah.

¹²King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all she desired, whatever she asked, besides his gifts in return for [*his gifts ... for: prob. rdg, Heb omitted*] what she had brought him. Then she departed and returned with her retinue to her own land.

¹³Now the weight of gold which Solomon received yearly was six hundred and sixty-six talents, ¹⁴in addition to the tolls levied on merchants and on traders who imported goods; all the kings of Arabia and the regional governors also [*all ... also: or and on all the kings of Arabia and the regional governors who*] brought gold and silver to the king.

¹⁵King Solomon made two hundred shields of beaten gold, and six hundred shekels of gold went to the making of each one; ¹⁶he also made three hundred bucklers of beaten gold, and three hundred shekels of gold went to the making of each buckler. The king put these into the House of the Forest of Lebanon.

¹⁷The king also made a great throne of ivory and overlaid it with pure gold. ¹⁸Six steps and a footstool for the throne were all encased in gold. There were arms on each side of

the seat, with a lion standing beside each of them, ¹⁹and twelve lions stood on the six steps, one at either end of each step. Nothing like it had ever been made for any monarch. ²⁰All Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the plate in the House of the Forest of Lebanon was of red gold; silver was reckoned of no value in the days of Solomon. ²¹The king had a fleet of ships plying to Tarshish with Hiram's men; once every three years this fleet of merchantmen came home, bringing gold and silver, ivory, apes, and monkeys.

²²Thus King Solomon outdid all the kings of the earth in wealth and wisdom, ²³and all the kings of the earth courted him, to hear the wisdom which God had put in his heart. ²⁴Each brought his gift with him, vessels of silver and gold, garments, perfumes and spices, horses and mules, so much year by year.

²⁵ [vv25-28: cp 1.14-17; 1Kgs. 10.26-29] Solomon had standing for four thousand horses and chariots, and twelve thousand cavalry horses, and he stabled some in the chariot-towns and kept others at hand in Jerusalem. ²⁶He ruled over all the kings from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines and the border of Egypt. ²⁷He made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as plentiful as sycomore-fig in the Shephelah. ²⁸Horses were imported from Egypt and from all countries for Solomon.

²⁹ [vv29-31: cp 1Kgs. 11.41-43] The rest of the acts of Solomon's reign, from first to last, are recorded in the history of Nathan the prophet, in the prophecy of Ahijah of Shiloh, and in the visions of Iddo the seer concerning Jeroboam son of Nebat. ³⁰Solomon ruled in Jerusalem over the whole of Israel for forty years. ³¹Then he rested with his forefathers and was buried in the city of David his father, and he was succeeded by his son Rehoboam.

The kings of Judah from Rehoboam to Ahaz

10¹ [vv1-19: cp 1Kgs. 12.1-19] REHOBOAM WENT TO SHECHEM, for all Israel had gone there to make him king. ²When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard of it in Egypt, where he had taken refuge to escape Solomon, he returned from Egypt. ³They now recalled him, and he and all Israel came to Rehoboam and said, ⁴'Your father laid a cruel yoke upon us; but if you will now lighten the cruel slavery he imposed on us and the heavy yoke he laid on us, we will serve you.' ⁵'Give me three days,' he said, 'and come back again.' So the people went away. ⁶King Rehoboam then consulted the elders who had been in attendance on his father Solomon while he lived: 'What answer do you advise me to give to this people?' ⁷And they said, 'If you show yourself well-disposed to this people and gratify them by speaking kindly to them, they will be your servants ever after.' ⁸But he rejected the advice which the elders gave him. He next consulted those who had grown up with him, the young men in attendance, ⁹and asked them, 'What answer do you advise me to give to this people's request that I should lighten the yoke which my father laid on them?' ¹⁰The young men replied, 'Give this answer to the people who say that your father made their yoke heavy and ask you to lighten it; tell them: "My little finger is thicker than my father's loins. ¹¹My father laid a heavy yoke on you; I will make it heavier. My father used the whip on you; but I will use the lash." ' ¹²Jeroboam

and the people all came back to Rehoboam on the third day, as the king had ordered. ¹³And the king gave them a harsh answer. He rejected the advice which the elders had given him ¹⁴and spoke to the people as the young men had advised: 'My father made your yoke heavy; I will make it heavier. My father used the whip on you; but I will use the lash.' ¹⁵So the king would not listen to the people; for the LORD had given this turn to the affair, in order that the word he had spoken by Ahijah of Shiloh to Jeroboam son of Nebat might be fulfilled.

¹⁶When all Israel saw [*saw: prob. rdg, cp 1Kgs. 12.16; Heb omitted*] that the king would not listen to them, they answered:

What share have we in David?

We have no lot in the son of Jesse.

Away to your homes, O Israel;

now see to your own house, David.

So all Israel went to their homes, ¹⁷and Rehoboam ruled over those Israelites who lived in the cities of Judah.

¹⁸Then King Rehoboam sent out Hadoram, the commander of the forced levies, but the Israelites stoned him to death; whereupon King Rehoboam mounted his chariot in haste and fled to Jerusalem. ¹⁹From that day to this, Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David.

11¹ [*vv1-4: cp 1Kgs. 12.21-24*] When Rehoboam reached Jerusalem, he assembled the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, a hundred and eighty thousand chosen warriors, to fight against Israel and recover his kingdom. ²But the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah the man of God: ³Say to Rehoboam son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all the Israelites in Judah and Benjamin, ⁴"This is the word of the LORD: You shall not go up to make war on your kinsmen. Return to your homes, for this is my will." ' So they listened to the word of the LORD and abandoned their campaign against Jeroboam.

⁵Rehoboam resided in Jerusalem and built up the defences of certain cities in Judah. The cities in Judah and Benjamin ⁶which he fortified were Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, ⁷Beth-zur, Soco, Adullam, ⁸Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, ⁹Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, ¹⁰Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron. ¹¹He strengthened the fortifications of these fortified cities, and put governors in them, as well as supplies of food, oil, and wine. ¹²Also he stored shields and spears in every one of the cities, and strengthened their fortifications. Thus he retained possession of Judah and Benjamin.

¹³Now the priests and the Levites throughout the whole of Israel resorted to Rehoboam from all their territories; ¹⁴for the Levites had left all their common land and their own patrimony and had gone to Judah and Jerusalem, because Jeroboam and his successors rejected their services as priests of the LORD, ¹⁵and he appointed his own priests for the hill-shrines, for the demons [*Or satyrs*], and for the calves which he had made. ¹⁶Those, from all the tribes of Israel, who were resolved to seek the LORD the God of Israel followed the Levites to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the LORD the God of their fathers. ¹⁷So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah and for three years made Rehoboam son of Solomon secure, because he followed the example of David and Solomon during that

time.

¹⁸Rehoboam married Mahalath, whose father was Jerimoth son of David and whose mother was Abihail daughter of Eliab son of Jesse. ¹⁹His sons by her were: Jeush, Shemariah and Zaham. ²⁰Next he married Maacah granddaughter of Absalom, who bore him Abijah, Attai, Ziza and Shelomith. ²¹Of all his wives and concubines, Rehoboam loved Maacah most; he had in all eighteen wives and sixty concubines and became the father of twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters. ²²He appointed Abijah son of Maacah chief among his brothers, making him crown prince and planning to make him his successor on the throne. ²³He showed discretion in detailing his sons to take charge of all the fortified cities throughout the whole territory of Judah and Benjamin; he also made generous provision for them and procured them [*prob. rdg, Heb asked for a multitude of*] wives.

12¹When the kingdom of Rehoboam was on a firm footing and he became strong, he forsook the law of the LORD, he and all Israel with him. ²In the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign, because of this disloyalty to the LORD, Shishak king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem ³with twelve hundred chariots and sixty thousand horsemen, and brought with him from Egypt an innumerable following of Libyans, Sukkites, and Cushites [*Or Nubians*]. ⁴He captured the fortified cities of Judah and reached Jerusalem. ⁵Then Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam and the leading men of Judah, who had assembled in Jerusalem before the advance of Shishak, and said to them, 'This is the word of the LORD: You have abandoned me; therefore I now abandon you to Shishak.' ⁶The princes of Israel and the king submitted and said, 'The LORD is just.' ⁷When the LORD saw that they had submitted, there came from him this word to Shemaiah: 'Because they have submitted I will not destroy them, I will let them barely escape; my wrath shall not be poured out on Jerusalem by means of Shishak, ⁸but they shall become his servants; then they will know the difference between serving me and serving the rulers of other countries.' ⁹ [*vv9-11: cp 1Kgs. 14.25-28*] Shishak king of Egypt in his attack on Jerusalem removed the treasures of the house of the LORD and of the royal palace. He seized everything, including the shields of gold that Solomon had made. ¹⁰King Rehoboam replaced them with bronze shields and entrusted them to the officers of the escort who guarded the entrance of the royal palace. ¹¹Whenever the king entered the house of the LORD, the escort entered, carrying the shields; afterwards they returned them to the guard-room. ¹²Because Rehoboam submitted, the LORD's wrath was averted from him, and he was not utterly destroyed; Judah enjoyed prosperity.

¹³ [*vv13-16: cp 1Kgs. 14.29-31*] Thus King Rehoboam increased his power in Jerusalem. He was forty-one years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned for seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel as the place to receive his Name. Rehoboam's mother was a woman of Ammon called Naamah. ¹⁴He did what was wrong, he did not make a practice of seeking guidance of the LORD. ¹⁵The events of Rehoboam's reign, from first to last, are recorded in the histories of Shemaiah the prophet and Iddo the seer [*prob. rdg, Heb adds to be enrolled by genealogy*]. There was continual fighting between Rehoboam and Jeroboam. ¹⁶He rested with his forefathers and was buried in the city of David; and he was succeeded by his son Abijah.

13¹IN THE EIGHTEENTH YEAR of King Jeroboam's reign Abijah became king of Judah. ²He reigned in Jerusalem for three years; his mother was Maacah daughter of Uriel of Gibeah. There was fighting between Abijah and Jeroboam. ³Abijah drew up his army of four hundred thousand picked troops in order of battle, while Jeroboam formed up against him with eight hundred thousand picked troops. ⁴Abijah took up position on the slopes of Mount Zemaraim in the hill-country of Ephraim and called out, 'Hear me, Jeroboam and all Israel: ⁵Ought you not to know that the LORD the God of Israel gave the kingship over Israel to David and his descendants in perpetuity by a covenant of salt? ⁶Yet Jeroboam son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon son of David, rose in rebellion against his lord, ⁷and certain worthless scoundrels gathered round him, who stubbornly opposed Solomon's son Rehoboam when he was young and inexperienced, and he was no match for them. ⁸Now you propose to match yourselves against the kingdom of the LORD as ruled by David's sons, you and your mob of supporters and the golden calves which Jeroboam has made to be your gods. ⁹Have you not dismissed from office the Aaronites, priests of the LORD, and the Levites, and followed the practice of other lands in appointing priests? Now, if any man comes for consecration with an offering of a young bull and seven rams, you accept him as a priest to a god that is no god. ¹⁰But as for us, the LORD is our God and we have not forsaken him; we have Aaronites as priests ministering to the LORD with the Levites, duly discharging their office. ¹¹Morning and evening, these burn whole-offerings and fragrant incense to the LORD and offer the Bread of the Presence arranged in rows on a table ritually clean; they also kindle the lamps on the golden lamp-stand every evening. Thus we do indeed keep the charge of the LORD our God, whereas you have forsaken him. ¹²God is with us at our head, and his priests stand there with trumpets to signal the battle-cry against you. Men of Israel, do not fight the LORD the God of your fathers; you will have no success.'

¹³Jeroboam sent a detachment of his troops to go round and lay an ambush in the rear, so that his main body faced Judah while the ambush lay behind them. ¹⁴The men of Judah turned to find that they were engaged front and rear. Then they cried to the LORD for help. The priests sounded their trumpets, ¹⁵and the men of Judah raised a shout, and when they did so, God put Jeroboam and all Israel to rout before Abijah and Judah. ¹⁶The Israelites fled before the men of Judah, and God delivered them into their power. ¹⁷So Abijah and his men defeated them with very heavy losses, and five hundred thousand picked Israelites fell in the battle. ¹⁸After this, the Israelites were reduced to submission, and Judah prevailed because they relied on the LORD the God of their fathers. ¹⁹Abijah followed up his victory over Jeroboam and captured from him the cities of Bethel, Jeshanah, and Ephron, with their villages. ²⁰Jeroboam did not regain his power during the days of Abijah; finally the LORD struck him down and he died.

²¹But Abiiah established his position; he married fourteen wives and became the father of twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters. ²²The other events of Abijah's reign, both what he said and what he did, are recorded in the story of the prophet Iddo. **14**¹Abijah rested with his forefathers and was buried in the city of David; and he was succeeded on the throne by his son Asa. In his days the land was at peace for ten years.

²Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God. ³He suppressed the

foreign altars and the hill-shrines, smashed the sacred pillars and hacked down the sacred poles, ⁴and ordered Judah to seek guidance of the LORD the God of their fathers and to keep the law and the commandments. ⁵He also suppressed the hill-shrines and the incense-altars in all the cities, and the kingdom was at peace under him. ⁶He built fortified cities in Judah, for the land was at peace. He had no war to fight during those years, because the LORD had given him security. ⁷He said to the men of Judah, 'Let us build these cities and fortify them, with walls round them, and towers and barred gates. The land still lies open before us. Because we have sought guidance of the LORD our God, he has sought us and given us security on every side.' So they built and prospered.

⁸Asa had an army equipped with shields and spears; three hundred thousand men came from Judah, and two hundred and eighty thousand from Benjamin, shield-bearers and archers; all were valiant warriors. ⁹Zerah the Cushite came out against them with an army a million strong and three hundred chariots. When he reached Mareshah, ¹⁰Asa came out to meet him and they took up position in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah. ¹¹Asa called upon the LORD his God and said, 'There is none like thee, O LORD, to help men, whether strong or weak; help us, O LORD our God, for on thee we rely and in thy name we have come out against this horde. O LORD, thou art our God, how can man vie with thee?' ¹²So the LORD gave Asa and Judah victory over the Cushites and they fled, ¹³and Asa and his men pursued them as far as Gerar. The Cushites broke before the LORD and his army, and many of them fell mortally wounded; and Judah carried off great loads of spoil. ¹⁴They destroyed all the cities around Gerar, for the LORD had struck the people with panic; and they plundered the cities, finding rich spoil in them all. ¹⁵They also killed the herdsmen and seized many sheep and camels, and then they returned to Jerusalem.

15¹The spirit of God came upon Azariah son of Oded, ²and he went out to meet Asa and said to him, 'Hear me, Asa and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD is with you when you are with him; if you look for him, he will let himself be found; if you forsake him, he will forsake you. ³For a long time Israel was without the true God, without a priest to interpret the law and without law [*without law: or without the law*]. ⁴But when, in their distress, they turned to the LORD the God of Israel and sought him, he let himself be found by them. ⁵At those times there was no safety for people as they went about their business; the inhabitants of every land had their fill of trouble; ⁶there was ruin on every side, nation at odds with nation, city with city, for God harassed them with every kind of distress. ⁷But now you must be strong and not let your courage fail; for your work will be rewarded.' ⁸When Asa heard these words [*prob. rdg, Heb adds and the prophecy, Oded the prophet*], he resolutely suppressed the loathsome idols in all Judah and Benjamin and in the cities which he had captured in the hill-country of Ephraim; and he repaired the altar of the LORD which stood before the vestibule of the LORD's house [*house: prob. rdg, Heb omitted*]. ⁹Then he assembled all Judah and Benjamin and all who had come from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon to reside among them; for great numbers had come over to him from Israel, when they saw that the LORD his God was with him. ¹⁰So they assembled at Jerusalem in the third month of the fifteenth year of Asa's reign, ¹¹and that day they sacrificed to the LORD seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep from the spoil which they had brought. ¹²And they entered into a covenant to seek guidance of the LORD the God of their fathers with all their heart and

soul; ¹³all who would not seek the LORD the God of Israel were to be put to death, young and old, men and women alike. ¹⁴Then they bound themselves by an oath to the LORD, with loud shouts of acclamation while trumpets and horns sounded; ¹⁵and all Judah rejoiced at the oath, because they had bound themselves with all their heart and had sought him earnestly, and he had let himself be found by them. So the LORD gave them security on every side. ¹⁶ [vv16-18: cp 1Kgs. 15.13-15] King Asa also deprived Maacah his grandmother of her rank as queen mother because she had an obscene object made for the worship of Asherah; Asa cut it down, ground it to powder and burnt it in the gorge of the Kidron. ¹⁷Although the hill-shrines were allowed to remain in Israel, Asa himself remained faithful all his life. ¹⁸He brought into the house of God all his father's votive offerings and his own, gold and silver and sacred vessels. ¹⁹And there was no more war until the thirty-fifth year of Asa's reign.

16¹ [vv1-6: cp 1Kgs. 15.17-22] In the thirty-sixth year of the reign of Asa, Baasha king of Israel invaded Judah and fortified Ramah to cut off all access to Asa king of Judah. ²So Asa brought out silver and gold from the treasuries of the house of the LORD and the royal palace, and sent this request to Ben-hadad king of Aram, whose capital was Damascus: ³'There is an alliance between us, as there was between our fathers. I now send you herewith silver and gold; break off your alliance with Baasha king of Israel, so that he may abandon his campaign against me.' ⁴Ben-hadad listened willingly to King Asa and ordered the commanders of his armies to move against the cities of Israel, and they attacked Iyyon, Dan, Abel-mayim, and all the store-cities of Naphtali. ⁵When Baasha heard of it, he ceased fortifying Ramah and stopped all work on it. ⁶Then King Asa took with him all the men of Judah and they carried away the stones of Ramah and the timbers with which Baasha had fortified it; and he used them to fortify Geba and Mizpah.

⁷At that time the seer Hanani came to Asa king of Judah and said to him, 'Because you relied on the king of Aram and not on the LORD your God, the army of the king of Israel has escaped. ⁸The Cushites and the Libyans, were they not a great army with a vast number of chariots and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on the LORD, he delivered them into your power. ⁹The eyes of the LORD range through the whole earth, to bring aid and comfort to those whose hearts are loyal to him. You have acted foolishly in this affair; you will have wars from now on.' ¹⁰Asa was angry with the seer and put him in the stocks; for these words of his had made the king very indignant. At the same time he treated some of the people with great brutality.

¹¹ [vv11-14: cp 1Kgs. 15.23, 24] The events of Asa's reign, from first to last, are recorded in the annals of the kings of Judah and Israel. ¹²In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa became gravely affected with gangrene in his feet; he did not seek guidance of the LORD but resorted to physicians. ¹³He rested with his forefathers, in the forty-first year of his reign, ¹⁴and was buried in the tomb which he had bought [Or dug] for himself in the city of David, being laid on a bier [Or in a niche] which had been heaped with all kinds of spices skilfully compounded; and they kindled a great fire in his honour.

17¹ASA WAS SUCCEEDED BY HIS SON JEHOSHAPHAT, who determined to resist Israel by force. ²He posted troops in all the fortified cities of Judah and stationed officers [Or

garrisons] throughout Judah and in the cities of Ephraim which his father Asa had captured. ³The LORD was with Jehoshaphat, for he followed the example his father had set in his early years and did not resort to the Baalim; ⁴he sought guidance of the God of his father and obeyed his commandments and did not follow the practices of Israel. ⁵So the LORD established the kingdom under his rule, and all Judah brought him gifts, and his wealth and fame [*Or riches*] became very great. ⁶He took pride in the service of the LORD; he also suppressed the hill-shrines and the sacred poles in Judah.

⁷In the third year of his reign he sent his officers, Ben-hayil, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethaneel, and Micaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah, ⁸together with the Levites, Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobiah, and Tob-adonijah [*prob. rdg, Heb adds the Levites*], accompanied by the priests Elishama and Jehoram. ⁹They taught in Judah, having with them the book of the law of the LORD; they went round the cities of Judah, teaching the people.

¹⁰So the dread of the LORD fell upon all the rulers of the lands surrounding Judah, and they did not make war on Jehoshaphat. ¹¹Certain Philistines brought a gift, a great quantity of silver, to Jehoshaphat; the Arabs too brought him seven thousand seven hundred rams and seven thousand seven hundred he-goats. ¹²Jehoshaphat became ever more powerful and built fortresses and store-cities in Judah; ¹³and he had much work on hand in the cities of Judah. He had regular, seasoned troops in Jerusalem, ¹⁴enrolled according to their clans in this way: of Judah, the officers over units of a thousand: Adnah the commander, together with three hundred thousand seasoned troops; ¹⁵and next to him the commander Johanan, with two hundred and eighty thousand; ¹⁶and next to him Amasiah son of Zichri, who had volunteered for the service of the LORD, with two hundred thousand seasoned troops; ¹⁷and of Benjamin: an experienced soldier Eliada, with two hundred thousand men armed with bows and shields; ¹⁸next to him Jehozabad, with a hundred and eighty thousand fully-armed men. ¹⁹These were the men who served the king, apart from those whom the king had posted in the fortified cities throughout Judah.

18¹When Jehoshaphat had become very wealthy and famous [*Or rich*], he allied himself with Ahab by marriage. ² [*vv2-34: cp 1Kgs. 22.2-35*] Some years afterwards he went down to visit Ahab in Samaria, and Ahab slaughtered many sheep and oxen for him and his retinue, and incited him to attack Ramoth-gilead. ³What Ahab king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat king of Judah was this: 'Will you join me in attacking Ramoth-gilead?' And he answered, 'What is mine is yours, myself and my people; I will join with you in the war.' ⁴Then Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, 'First let us seek counsel from the LORD.' ⁵The king of Israel assembled the prophets, some four hundred of them, and asked them, 'Shall I attack Ramoth-gilead or shall I refrain?' 'Attack,' they answered; 'God will deliver it into your hands.' ⁶Jehoshaphat asked, 'Is there no other prophet of the LORD here through whom we may seek guidance?' ⁷'There is one more', the king of Israel answered, 'through whom we may seek guidance of the LORD, but I hate the man, because he never prophesies any good for me; never anything but evil. His name is Micaiah son of Imla.' Jehoshaphat exclaimed, 'My lord king, let no such word pass your lips!' ⁸So the king of Israel called one of his eunuchs and told him to fetch Micaiah son of Imla with all speed.

⁹The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah were seated on their thrones, clothed in their royal robes and in shining armour, at the entrance to the gate of Samaria, and all the prophets were prophesying before them. ¹⁰One of them, Zedekiah son of Kenaanah, made himself horns of iron and said, 'This is the word of the LORD: "With horns like these you shall gore the Aramaeans and make an end of them." ' ¹¹In the same vein all the prophets prophesied, 'Attack Ramoth-gilead and win the day; the LORD will deliver it into your hands.' ¹²The messenger sent to fetch Micaiah told him that the prophets had with one voice given the king a favourable answer. 'And mind you agree with them', he added. ¹³'As the LORD lives,' said Micaiah, 'I will say only what my God tells me to say.'

¹⁴When Micaiah came into the king's presence, the king said to him, 'Micaiah, shall I attack Ramoth-gilead or shall I refrain?' 'Attack and win the day,' he said, 'and it will fall into your hands.' ¹⁵'How often must I adjure you', said the king, 'to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?' ¹⁶Then Micaiah said, 'I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, like sheep without a shepherd; and I heard the LORD say, "They have no master; let them go home in peace." ' ¹⁷The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, 'Did I not tell you that he never prophesies good for me, nothing but evil?' ¹⁸Micaiah went on, 'Listen now to the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD seated on his throne, with all the host of heaven in attendance on his right and on his left. ¹⁹The LORD said, "Who will entice Ahab to attack and fall on [Or at] Ramoth-gilead?" One said one thing and one said another; ²⁰then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD and said, "I will entice him." "How?" said the LORD. ²¹"I will go out", he said, "and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets." "You shall entice him," said the LORD, "and you shall succeed; go and do it." ²²You see, then, how the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours, because he has decreed disaster for you.' ²³Then Zedekiah son of Kenaanah came up to Micaiah and struck him in the face: 'And how did the spirit of the LORD pass from me to speak to you?' he said. ²⁴Micaiah answered, 'That you will find out on the day when you run into an inner room to hide yourself.' ²⁵Then the king of Israel ordered Micaiah to be arrested and committed to the custody of Amon the governor of the city and Joash the king's son [son: or deputy]. ²⁶'Lock this fellow up', he said, 'and give him prison diet of bread and water until I come home in safety.' ²⁷Micaiah retorted, 'If you do return in safety, the LORD has not spoken by me.' [prob. rdg, Heb adds and he said, 'Listen, peoples, all together.']

²⁸So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah marched on Ramoth-gilead, ²⁹and the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, 'I will disguise myself to go into battle, but you shall wear your royal robes.' So he went into battle in disguise. ³⁰Now the king of Aram had commanded the captains of his chariots not to engage all and sundry but the king of Israel alone. ³¹When the captains saw Jehoshaphat, they thought he was the king of Israel and wheeled to attack him. But Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD came to his help; and God drew them away from him. ³²When the captains saw that he was not the king of Israel, they broke off the attack on him. ³³But one man drew his bow at random and hit the king of Israel where the breast-plate joins the plates of the armour. So he said to his driver, 'Wheel round and take me out of the line; I am wounded.' ³⁴When the day's fighting reached its height, the king of Israel was facing the Aramaeans, propped

up in his chariot; he remained so till evening, and at sunset he died.

19¹As Jehoshaphat king of Judah returned in safety to his home in Jerusalem, ²Jehu son of Hanani, the seer, went out to meet him and said, 'Do you take delight in helping the wicked and befriending the enemies of the LORD? The LORD will make you suffer for this. ³Yet there is some good in you, for you have swept away the sacred poles from the land and have made a practice of seeking guidance of God.'

⁴Jehoshaphat had his residence in Jerusalem, but he went out again among his people from Beersheba to the hill-country of Ephraim and brought them back to the LORD the God of their fathers. ⁵He appointed judges throughout the land, one in each of the fortified cities of Judah, ⁶and said to them, 'Be careful what you do; you are there as judges, to please not man but the LORD, who is with you when you pass sentence. ⁷Let the dread of the LORD be upon you, then; take care what you do, for the LORD our God will not tolerate injustice, partiality, or bribery.'

⁸In Jerusalem Jehoshaphat appointed some of the Levites and priests and some heads of families by paternal descent in Israel to administer the law of the LORD and to arbitrate in lawsuits among the inhabitants [in ... inhabitants: *prob. rdg, Heb obscure*] of the city, ⁹and he gave them these instructions: 'You must always act in the fear of the LORD, faithfully and with singleness of mind. ¹⁰In every suit which comes before you from your kinsmen, in whatever city they live, whether cases of bloodshed or offences against the law or the commandments, against statutes or regulations, you shall warn them to commit no offence against the LORD; otherwise you and your kinsmen will suffer for it. If you act thus, you will be free of all offence. ¹¹Your authority in all matters which concern the LORD is Amariah the chief priest, and in those which concern the king it is Zebediah son of Ishmael, the prince of the house of Judah; the Levites are your officers. Be strong and resolute, and may the LORD be on the side of the good!'

20¹It happened some time afterwards that the Moabites, the Ammonites, and some of the Meunites made war on Jehoshaphat. ²News was brought to him that a great horde of them was attacking him from beyond the Dead Sea, from Edom, and was already at Hazazon-tamar, which is En-gedi. ³Jehoshaphat in his alarm resolved to seek guidance of the LORD and proclaimed a fast for all Judah. ⁴Judah gathered together to ask counsel of the LORD; from every city of the land they came to consult him. ⁵Jehoshaphat stood up in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem in the house of the LORD, in front of the New Court, ⁶and said, 'O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? Thou rulest over all the kingdoms of the nations; in thy hand are strength and power, and there is none who can withstand thee. ⁷Didst not thou, O God our God, dispossess the inhabitants of this land in favour of thy people Israel, and give it for ever to the descendants of Abraham thy friend? ⁸So they lived in it and have built a sanctuary in it in honour of thy name and said, ⁹"Should evil come upon us, war or flood [*prob. rdg, Heb judgement*], pestilence or famine, we will stand before this house and before thee, for in this house is thy Name, and we will cry to thee in our distress and thou wilt hear and save." ¹⁰Thou didst not allow Israel, when they came out of Egypt, to enter the land of the Ammonites, the Moabites, and the people of the hill-country of Seir, so they turned aside and left them alone and did not destroy them.

¹¹Now see how these people repay us: they are coming to drive us out of thy possession which thou didst give to us. ¹²Judge them, O God our God, for we have no strength to face this great horde which is invading our land; we know not what we ought to do; we lift our eyes to thee.'

¹³So all Judah stood there before the LORD, with their dependants, their wives and their children. ¹⁴Then, in the midst of the assembly, the spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the line of Asaph, ¹⁵and he said, 'Attend, all Judah, all inhabitants of Jerusalem, and King Jehoshaphat; this is the word of the LORD to you: "Have no fear; do not be dismayed by this great horde, for the battle is in God's hands, not yours. ¹⁶Go down to meet them tomorrow; they will come up by the Ascent of Ziz. You will find them at the end of the valley, east of the wilderness of Jeruel. ¹⁷It is not you who will fight this battle; stand firm and wait, and you will see the deliverance worked by the LORD: he is on your side, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not fear or be dismayed; go out tomorrow to face them; for the LORD is on your side." ' ¹⁸Jehoshaphat bowed his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the LORD to make obeisance to him. ¹⁹Then the Levites of the lines of Kohath and Korah stood up and praised the LORD the God of Israel with a mighty shout.

²⁰So they rose early in the morning and went out to the wilderness of Tekoa; and, as they were starting, Jehoshaphat took his stand and said, 'Hear me, O Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: hold firmly to your faith in the LORD your God and you will be upheld; have faith in his prophets and you will prosper.' ²¹After consulting with the people, he appointed men to sing to the LORD and praise the splendour of his holiness [*Or singers in sacred vestments to praise the LORD*] as they went before the armed troops, and they sang:

Give thanks to the LORD,
for his love endures for ever.

²²As soon as their loud shouts of praise were heard, the LORD deluded the Ammonites and Moabites and the men of the hill-country of Seir, who were invading Judah, and they were defeated. ²³It turned out that the Ammonites and Moabites had taken up a position against the men of the hill-country of Seir, and set themselves to annihilate and destroy them; and when they had exterminated the men of Seir, they savagely attacked one another. ²⁴So when Judah came to the watch-tower in the wilderness and looked towards the enemy horde, there they were all lying dead upon the ground; none had escaped. ²⁵When Jehoshaphat and his men came to collect the booty, they found a large number of cattle, goods, clothing, and precious things, which they plundered until they could carry away no more. They spent three days collecting the booty, there was so much of it. ²⁶On the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Berakah [*That is Valley of Blessing*], the name that it bears to this day because they blessed the LORD there. ²⁷Then all the men of Judah and Jerusalem, with Jehoshaphat at their head, returned home to the city in triumph; for the LORD had given them cause to triumph over their enemies. ²⁸They entered Jerusalem with lutes, harps, and trumpets playing, and went into the house of the LORD. ²⁹So the dread of God fell upon the rulers of every country, when they heard that the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel; ³⁰and the realm of Jehoshaphat was at peace, God giving him security on all sides.

31 [vv31-33: cp 1Kgs. 22.41-43] Thus Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah. He was thirty-five years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned in Jerusalem for twenty-five years; his mother was Azubah daughter of Shilhi. ³²He followed in the footsteps of Asa his father and did not swerve from them; he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD: ³³But the hill-shrines were allowed to remain, and the people did not set their hearts upon the God of their fathers. ³⁴The other events of Jehoshaphat's reign, from first to last, are recorded in the history of Jehu son of Hanani, which is included in the annals of the kings of Israel.

³⁵Later Jehoshaphat king of Judah allied himself with Ahaziah king of Israel; he did wrong ³⁶in joining with him to build ships for trade with Tarshish; these were built in Ezion-geber. ³⁷But Eliezer son of Dodavahu of Mareshah denounced Jehoshaphat with this prophecy: 'Because you have joined with Ahaziah, the LORD will bring your work to nothing.' So the ships were wrecked and could not make the voyage to Tarshish.

21¹JEHOSHAPHAT RESTED WITH HIS FOREFATHERS and was buried with them in the city of David. He was succeeded by his son Joram, ²whose brothers were Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azariah, Michael, and Shephatiah, sons of Jehoshaphat. All of them were sons of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, ³and their father gave them many gifts, silver and gold and other costly things, as well as fortified cities in Judah; but the kingship he gave to Joram because he was the eldest.

⁴When Joram was firmly established on his father's throne, he put to the sword all his brothers and also some of the princes of Israel. ⁵ [vv5-10: cp 2Kgs. 8.17-22] He was thirty-two years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned in Jerusalem for eight years. ⁶He followed the practices of the kings of Israel as the house of Ahab had done, for he had married Ahab's daughter; and he did what was wrong in the eyes of the LORD. ⁷But for the sake of the covenant which he had made with David, the LORD was unwilling to destroy the house of David, since he had promised to give him and his sons a flame, to burn for all time.

⁸During his reign Edom revolted against Judah and set up its own king. ⁹Joram, with his commanders and all his chariots, advanced into Edom. He and his chariot-commanders set out by night, but they were surrounded by the Edomites and defeated [and defeated: *prob. rdg, Heb* and he defeated them]. ¹⁰So Edom has remained independent of Judah to this day. Libnah revolted against him at the same time, because he had forsaken the LORD the God of his fathers, ¹¹and because he had built hill-shrines in the hill-country of Judah and had seduced the inhabitants of Jerusalem into idolatrous practices and corrupted Judah.

¹²A letter reached Joram from Elijah the prophet, which ran thus: 'This is the word of the LORD the God of David your father: "You have not followed in the footsteps of Jehoshaphat your father and of Asa king of Judah, ¹³but have followed the kings of Israel and have seduced Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, as the house of Ahab did; and you have put to death your own brothers, sons of your father's house, men better than yourself. ¹⁴Because of all this, the LORD is about to strike a heavy blow at your people, your children, your wives, and all your possessions, ¹⁵and you yourself will

suffer from a chronic disease of the bowels, until they prolapse and become severely ulcerated." ' ¹⁶Then the LORD aroused against Joram the anger of the Philistines and of the Arabs who live near the Cushites, ¹⁷and they invaded Judah and made their way right through it, carrying off all the property which they found in the king's palace, as well as his sons and wives; not a son was left to him except the youngest, Jehoahaz. ¹⁸It was after all this that the LORD struck down the king with an incurable disease of the bowels. ¹⁹It continued for some time, and towards the end of the second year the disease caused his bowels to prolapse, and the painful ulceration brought on his death. But his people kindled no fire in his honour as they had done for his fathers. ²⁰He was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem for eight years. His passing went unsung, and he was buried in the city of David, but not in the burial-place of the kings.

22¹ [*vv1-6: cp 2Kgs. 8.25-29*] Then the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah, his youngest son, king in his place, for the raiders who had joined the Arabs in the campaign had killed all the elder sons. So Ahaziah son of Joram became king of Judah. ²He was forty-two years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned in Jerusalem for one year; his mother was Athaliah granddaughter of Omri. ³He too followed the practices of the house of Ahab, for his mother was his counsellor in wickedness. ⁴He did what was wrong in the eyes of the LORD like the house of Ahab, for they had been his counsellors after his father's death, to his undoing. ⁵He followed their counsel also in the alliance he made with Jehoram son of Ahab king of Israel, to fight against Hazael king of Aram at Ramoth-gilead. But Jehoram was wounded by the Aramaeans, ⁶and returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds which were inflicted on him at Ramoth in battle with Hazael king of Aram.

Because of Jehoram's illness Ahaziah son of Joram king of Judah went down to Jezreel to visit him. ⁷It was God's will that the visit of Ahaziah to Jehoram should be the occasion of his downfall. During the visit he went out with Jehoram to meet Jehu son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to bring the house of Ahab to an end. ⁸So it came about that Jehu, who was then at variance with the house of Ahab, found the officers of Judah and the kinsmen of Ahaziah who were his attendants, and killed them. ⁹Then he searched out Ahaziah himself, and his men captured him in Samaria, where he had gone into hiding. They brought him to Jehu and put him to death; they gave him burial, for they said, 'He was a son of Jehoshaphat who sought the guidance of the LORD with his whole heart.' Then the house of Ahaziah had no one strong enough to rule.

¹⁰ [*vv22.10-23.21: cp 2Kgs. 11.1-20*] As soon as Athaliah mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she set out to extirpate the royal line of the house of Judah. ¹¹But Jehosheba daughter of King Joram took Ahaziah's son Joash and stole him away from among the princes who were being murdered; she put him and his nurse in a bedchamber. Thus Jehosheba, daughter of King Joram and wife of Jehoiada the priest, because she was Ahaziah's sister, hid Joash from Athaliah so that she did not put him to death. ¹²He remained concealed with them in the house of God for six years, while Athaliah ruled the country.

23¹In the seventh year Jehoiada felt himself strong enough to make an agreement with Azariah son of Jeroham, Ishmael son of Jehohanan, Azariah son of Obed, Maaseiah son

of Adaiah, and Elishaphat son of Zichri, all captains of units of a hundred. ²They went all through Judah and gathered to Jerusalem the Levites from the cities of Judah and the heads of clans in Israel, and they came to Jerusalem. ³All the assembly made a compact with the king in the house of God, and Jehoiada said to them, 'Here is the king's son! He shall be king, as the LORD promised that the sons of David should be. ⁴This is what you must do: a third of you, priests and Levites, as you come on duty on the sabbath, are to be on guard at the threshold gates, ⁵another third are to be in the royal palace, and another third are to be at the Foundation Gate, while all the people will be in the courts of the house of the LORD. ⁶Let no one enter the house of the LORD except the priests and the attendant Levites; they may enter, for they are holy, but all the people shall continue to keep the LORD's charge. ⁷The Levites shall mount guard round the king, each with his weapons at the ready; anyone who tries to enter the house is to be put to death. They shall stay with the king wherever he goes.'

⁸The Levites and all Judah carried out the orders of Jehoiada the priest to the letter. Each captain took his men, both those who came on duty on the sabbath and those who came off, for Jehoiada the priest had not released the outgoing divisions. ⁹And Jehoiada the priest handed out to the captains King David's spears, shields, and bucklers, which were in the house of God; ¹⁰and he posted all the people, each man carrying his weapon at the ready, from corner to corner of the house to north and south [*prob. rdg, Heb adds of the altar and the house*], surrounding the king. ¹¹Then they brought out the king's son, put the crown on his head, handed him the warrant and proclaimed him, king, and Jehoiada and his sons anointed him; and a shout went up: 'Long live the king.' ¹²When Athaliah heard the noise of the people as they ran about cheering for the king, she came into the house of the LORD where the people were ¹³and found the king standing on the dais [*prob. rdg, cp 2Kgs. 11.14; Heb by his pillar*] at the entrance, amidst outbursts of song and fanfares of trumpets in his honour; all the populace were rejoicing and blowing trumpets, and singers with musical instruments were leading the celebrations. Athaliah rent her clothes and cried, 'Treason! Treason!' ¹⁴Jehoiada the priest gave orders to [*gave orders to: prob. rdg, cp 2Kgs. 11.15; Heb brought out*] the captains in command of the troops: 'Bring her outside the precincts and let anyone in attendance on her be put to the sword'; for the priest said, 'Do not kill her in the house of the LORD.' ¹⁵So they laid hands on her and took her to the royal palace and killed her there at the passage to the Horse Gate.

¹⁶Then Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD [*the LORD: prob. rdg, cp 2Kgs. 11.17; Heb him*] and the whole people and the king, that they should be the LORD's people. ¹⁷And all the people went into the temple of Baal and pulled it down; they smashed its altars and images, and they slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. ¹⁸Then Jehoiada committed the supervision of the house of the LORD to the charge of the priests and the Levites whom David had allocated to the house of the LORD, to offer whole-offerings to the LORD as prescribed in the law of Moses, with the singing and rejoicing as handed down from David. ¹⁹He stationed the door-keepers at the gates of the house of the LORD, to prevent anyone entering who was in any way unclean. ²⁰Then he took the captains of units of a hundred, the nobles, and the governors of the people, and all the people of the land, and they escorted the king from the house of the LORD through the Upper Gate to the royal palace, and seated him on the royal throne. ²¹The whole people rejoiced and the city was tranquil. That is how Athaliah was put to the

sword.

24¹ [*vv1-14: cp 2Kgs. 11.21-12.15*] Joash was seven years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem for forty years; his mother was Zibiah of Beersheba. ²He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD as long as Jehoiada the priest was alive. ³Jehoiada chose him two wives, and he had a family of sons and daughters.

⁴Some time after this, Joash decided to repair the house of the LORD. ⁵So he assembled the priests and the Levites and said to them, 'Go through the cities of Judah and collect the annual tax from all the Israelites for the restoration of the house of your God, and do it quickly.' But the Levites did not act quickly. ⁶The king then called for Jehoiada the chief priest and said to him, 'Why have you not required the Levites to bring in from Judah and Jerusalem the tax imposed by Moses the servant of the LORD and by the assembly of Israel for the Tent of the Tokens?' ⁷For the wicked Athaliah and her adherents had broken into the house of God and had devoted all its holy things to the service of the Baalim. ⁸So the king ordered them to make a chest and to put it outside the gate of the house of the LORD; ⁹and proclamation was made throughout Judah and Jerusalem that the people should bring to the LORD the tax imposed on Israel in the wilderness by Moses the servant of God. ¹⁰And all the leaders and all the people gladly brought their taxes and cast them into the chest until it was full. ¹¹Whenever the chest was brought to the king's officers by the Levites and they saw that it was well filled, the king's secretary and the chief priest's officer would come to empty it, after which it was carried back to its place. This they did daily, and they collected a great sum of money. ¹²The king and Jehoiada gave it to those responsible for carrying out the work in the house of the LORD, and they hired masons and carpenters to do the repairs, as well as craftsmen in iron and copper [*Or bronze*] to restore the house. ¹³So the workmen proceeded with their task and the new work progressed under their hands; they restored the house of God according to its original design and strengthened it. ¹⁴When they had finished, they brought what was left of the money to the king and to Jehoiada, and it was made into vessels for the house of the LORD, both for service and for sacrificing, saucers and other vessels of gold and silver. While Jehoiada lived, whole-offerings were offered in the house of the LORD continually.

¹⁵Jehoiada, now old and weighed down with years, died at the age of a hundred and thirty ¹⁶and was buried with the kings in the city of David, because he had done good in Israel and served God and his house.

¹⁷After the death of Jehoiada the leading men of Judah came and made obeisance to the king. He listened to them, ¹⁸and they forsook the house of the LORD the God of their fathers and worshipped sacred poles and idols. And Judah and Jerusalem suffered for this wickedness. ¹⁹But the LORD sent prophets to bring them back to himself, prophets who denounced them and were not heeded. ²⁰Then the spirit of God took possession of Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest, and he stood looking down on the people and said to them, 'This is the word of God: "Why do you disobey the commands of the LORD and court disaster? Because you have forsaken the LORD, he has forsaken you." ' ²¹But they made common cause against him, and on orders from the king they stoned him to death in the court of the house of the LORD. ²²King Joash did not remember the loyalty of

Zechariah's father Jehoiada but killed his son, who said as he was dying, 'May the LORD see this and exact the penalty.'

²³At the turn of the year an Aramaean army advanced against Joash; they invaded Judah and Jerusalem and massacred all the officers, so that the army ceased to exist, and sent all their spoil to the king of Damascus. ²⁴Although the Aramaeans had invaded with a small force, the LORD delivered a very great army into their hands, because the people had forsaken the LORD the God of their fathers, and Joash suffered just punishment.

²⁵ [*vv25-27: cp 2Kgs. 12.20, 21*]When the Aramaeans had withdrawn, leaving the king severely wounded, his servants conspired against him to avenge the death of the son of Jehoiada the priest; and they killed him on his bed. Thus he died and was buried in the city of David, but not in the burial-place of the kings. ²⁶The conspirators were Zabad son of Shimeath an Ammonite woman and Jehozabad son of Shimrith a Moabite woman. ²⁷His children, the many oracles about him, and his reconstruction of the house of God are all on record in the story given in the annals of the kings. He was succeeded by his son Amaziah.

25¹ [*vv1-4: cp 2Kgs. 14.1-6*]**AMAZIAH WAS TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OLD** when he came to the throne, and he reigned in Jerusalem for twenty-nine years; his mother was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. ²He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, but not whole-heartedly. ³When the royal power was firmly in his grasp, he put to death those of his servants who had murdered the king his father; ⁴but he spared their children, in obedience to the LORD's command written in the law of Moses: 'Fathers shall not die for their children, nor children for their fathers; a man shall die only for his own sin.'

⁵Then Amaziah assembled the men of Judah and drew them up by families, all Judah and Benjamin as well, under officers over units of a thousand and a hundred. He mustered those of twenty years old and upwards and found their number to be three hundred thousand, all picked troops ready for service, able to handle spear and shield. ⁶He also hired a hundred thousand seasoned troops from Israel for a hundred talents of silver. ⁷But a man of God came to him and said, 'My lord king, do not let the Israelite army march with you; the LORD is not with Israel – all these Ephraimites! ⁸For, if you make these people [*these people: prob. rdg, Heb obscure*] your allies in the war, God will overthrow you in battle; he has power to help or to overthrow.' ⁹Then Amaziah said to the man of God, 'What am I to do about the hundred talents which I have spent on the Israelite army?' The man of God answered, 'It is in the LORD's power to give you much more than that.' ¹⁰So Amaziah detached the troops which had come to him from Ephraim and sent them home; that infuriated them against Judah and they went home in a rage.

¹¹Then Amaziah took heart and led his men to the Valley of Salt and there killed ten thousand men of Seir. ¹²The men of Judah captured another ten thousand men alive, brought them to the top of a cliff [*a cliff: or Sela*] and hurled them over so that they were all dashed to pieces. ¹³Meanwhile the troops which Amaziah had sent home without allowing them to take part in the battle raided the cities of Judah from Samaria to Beth-horon, massacred three thousand people in them and carried off quantities of

booty.

¹⁴After Amaziah had returned from the defeat of the Edomites, he brought the gods of the people of Seir and, setting them up as his own gods, worshipped them and burnt sacrifices to them. ¹⁵The LORD was angry with Amaziah for this and sent a prophet who said to him, 'Why have you resorted to gods who could not save their own people from you?' ¹⁶But while he was speaking, the king said to him, 'Have we appointed you counsellor to the king? Stop! Why risk your life?' The prophet did stop, but first he said, 'I know that God has determined to destroy you because you have done this and have not listened to my counsel.'

¹⁷ [vv17-24: cp 2Kgs. 14.8-14] Then Amaziah king of Judah, after consultation, sent messengers to Jehoash son of Jehoahaz, son of Jehu, king of Israel, to propose a meeting. ¹⁸But Jehoash king of Israel sent this answer to Amaziah king of Judah: 'A thistle in Lebanon sent to a cedar in Lebanon to say, "Give your daughter in marriage to my son." But a wild beast in Lebanon, passing by, trampled on the thistle. ¹⁹You have defeated Edom, you say, but it has gone to your head. Enjoy your glory at home and stay there. Why should you involve yourself in disaster and bring yourself to the ground, and Judah with you?'

²⁰But Amaziah would not listen; and this was God's doing in order to give Judah into the power of Jehoash, because they had resorted to the gods of Edom. ²¹So Jehoash king of Israel marched out, and he and Amaziah king of Judah met one another at Beth-shemesh in Judah. ²²The men of Judah were routed by Israel and fled to their homes. ²³But Jehoash king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, son of Joash, son of Jehoahaz, at Beth-shemesh, and brought him to Jerusalem. There he broke down the city wall from the Gate of Ephraim to the Corner Gate, a distance of four hundred cubits; ²⁴he also took [he also took: prob. rdg, cp 2Kgs. 14.14; Heb omitted] all the gold and silver and all the vessels found in the house of God, in the care of Obed-edom, and the treasures of the royal palace, as well as hostages, and returned to Samaria.

²⁵ [vv25.25-26.2: cp 2Kgs. 14.17-22] Amaziah son of Joash, king of Judah, outlived Jehoash son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel, by fifteen years. ²⁶The other events of Amaziah's reign, from first to last, are recorded in the annals of the kings of Judah and Israel. ²⁷From the time when he turned away from the LORD, there was conspiracy against him in Jerusalem and he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish and put him to death there. ²⁸Then his body was conveyed on horseback to Jerusalem, and there he was buried with his forefathers in the city of David.

26¹All the people of Judah took Uzziah, now sixteen years old, and made him king in succession to his father Amaziah. ²It was he who built Eloth and restored it to Judah after the king rested with his forefathers.

³ [vv3, 4: cp 2Kgs. 15.2, 3] Uzziah was sixteen years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned in Jerusalem for fifty-two years; his mother was Jecoliah of Jerusalem. ⁴He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, as Amaziah his father had done. ⁵He set himself to seek the guidance of God in the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God; as long as he sought guidance of the LORD, God caused him to prosper.

⁶He took the field against the Philistines and broke down the walls of Gath, Jabneh, and Ashdod; and he built cities in the territory of Ashdod and among the Philistines. ⁷God aided him against them, against the Arabs who lived in Gur-baal, and against the Meunites. ⁸The Ammonites brought gifts to Uzziah and his fame spread to the borders of Egypt, for he had become very powerful. ⁹Besides, he built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, at the Valley Gate, and at the escarpment, and fortified them. ¹⁰He built other towers in the wilderness and dug many cisterns, for he had large herds of cattle both in the Shephelah and in the plain. He also had farmers and vine-dressers in the hill-country and in the fertile lands, for he loved the soil.

¹¹Uzziah had an army of soldiers trained and ready for service, grouped according to the census made by Jeiel the adjutant-general and Maaseiah the clerk under the direction of Hananiah, one of the king's commanders. ¹²The total number of heads of families which supplied seasoned warriors was two thousand six hundred. ¹³Under their command was an army of three hundred and seven thousand five hundred, a powerful fighting force in aid the king against his enemies. ¹⁴Uzziah prepared for the whole army shields, spears, helmets, coats of mail, bows, and [*prob. rdg, Heb adds for*] sling-stones. ¹⁵In Jerusalem he had machines designed by engineers for use upon towers and bastions, made to discharge arrows and large stones. His fame spread far and wide, for he was so wonderfully gifted that he became very powerful.

¹⁶But when he grew powerful his pride led to his own undoing [*his pride ... undoing: or he became so proud that he acted corruptly*]: he offended against the LORD his God by entering the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. ¹⁷Azariah the priest and eighty others of the LORD's priests, courageous men, went in after King Uzziah, ¹⁸confronted him and said, 'It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the Aaronite priests who have been consecrated for that office. Leave the sanctuary; for you have offended, and that will certainly bring you no honour from the LORD God.' ¹⁹The king, who had a censer in his hand ready to burn incense, was indignant; and because of his indignation at the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead in the presence of the priests, there in the house of the LORD, beside the altar of incense. ²⁰When Azariah the chief priest and the other priests looked towards him, they saw that he had leprosy on his forehead and they hurried him out of the temple, and indeed he himself hastened to leave, because the LORD had struck him with the disease. ²¹ [*vv21-23: cp 2Kgs. 15.5-7*] And King Uzziah remained a leper till the day of his death; he lived in his own house as a leper, relieved of all duties and excluded from the house of the LORD, while his son Jotham was comptroller of the household and regent. ²²The other events of Uzziah's reign, from first to last, are recorded by the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. ²³So he rested with his forefathers and was buried in a burial-ground, but not that of the kings; for they said, 'He is a leper'; and he was succeeded by his son Jotham.

27¹ [*vv1-3: cp 2Kgs. 15.33-35*] Jotham was twenty-five years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned in Jerusalem for sixteen years; his mother was Jerushah daughter of Zadok. ²He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, as his father Uzziah had done, but unlike him he did not enter the temple of the LORD; the people, however,

continued their corrupt practices. ³He constructed the upper gate of the house of the LORD and built extensively on the wall at Ophel. ⁴He built cities in the hill-country of Judah, and forts and towers on the wooded hills. ⁵He made war on the king of the Ammonites and defeated him; and that year the Ammonites gave him a hundred talents of silver, ten thousand kor of wheat and ten thousand of barley. They paid him the same tribute in the second and third years. ⁶Jotham became very powerful because he maintained a steady course of obedience to the LORD his God. ⁷The other events of Jotham's reign, all that he did in war and in peace, are recorded in the annals of the kings of Israel and Judah. ⁸He was twenty-five years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned in Jerusalem for sixteen years. ⁹He rested with his forefathers and was buried in the city of David; and he was succeeded by his son Ahaz.

28¹ [vv1-4: cp 2Kgs. 16.2-4] **AHAZ WAS TWENTY YEARS OLD** when he came to the throne, and he reigned in Jerusalem for sixteen years. He did not do what was right in the eyes of the LORD like his forefather David, ²but followed in the footsteps of the kings of Israel, and cast metal images for the Baalim. ³He also burnt sacrifices in the Valley of Ben-hinnom; he even burnt his sons in the fire according to the abominable practice of the nations whom the LORD had dispossessed in favour of the Israelites. ⁴He slaughtered and burnt sacrifices at the hill-shrines and on the hill-tops and under every spreading tree.

⁵The LORD his God let him suffer at the hands of the king of Aram, and the Aramaeans defeated him, took many captives and brought them to Damascus; he was also made to suffer at the hands of the king of Israel, who inflicted a severe defeat on him. ⁶This was Pekah son of Remaliah, who killed in one day a hundred and twenty thousand men of Judah, seasoned troops, because they had forsaken the LORD the God of their fathers. ⁷And Zichri, an Ephraimite hero, killed Maaseiah the king's son [son: *or* deputy] and Azrikam the comptroller of the household and Elkanah the king's chief minister. ⁸The Israelites took captive from their kinsmen two hundred thousand women and children; they also took a large amount of booty and brought it to Samaria.

⁹A prophet of the LORD was there, Oded by name; he went out to meet the army as it returned to Samaria and said to them, 'It is because the LORD the God of your fathers is angry with Judah that he has given them into your power; and you have massacred them in a rage that has towered up to heaven. ¹⁰Now you propose to force the people of Judah and Jerusalem, male and female, into slavery. Are not you also guilty men before the LORD your God? ¹¹Now, listen to me. Send back those you have taken captive from your kinsmen, for the anger of the LORD is roused against you.' ¹²Next, some Ephraimite chiefs, Azariah son of Jehohanan, Berechiah son of Meshillemoth, Hezekiah [*Or* Jehizkiah] son of Shallum, and Amasa son of Hadlai, met those who were returning from the war ¹³and said to them, 'You must not bring these captives into our country; what you are proposing would make us guilty before the LORD and add to our sins and transgressions. We are guilty enough already, and there is fierce anger against Israel.' ¹⁴So the armed men left the captives and the spoil with the officers and the assembled people. ¹⁵The captives were put in charge of men nominated for this duty, who found clothes from the spoil for all who were naked. They clothed them and shod them, gave them food and drink, and anointed them; those who were tottering from exhaustion

they conveyed on the backs of asses, and so brought them to their kinsmen in Jericho, in the Vale of Palm Trees. Then they themselves returned to Samaria.

¹⁶At that time King Ahaz sent to the king of Assyria for help. ¹⁷The Edomites had invaded again and defeated Judah and taken away prisoners; ¹⁸and the Philistines had raided the cities of the Shephelah and of the Negeb of Judah and had captured Bethshemesh, Aijalon, and Gederoth, as well as Soco, Timnah, and Gimzo with their villages, and occupied them. ¹⁹The LORD had reduced Judah to submission because of Ahaz king of Judah; for his actions in Judah had been unbridled and he had been grossly unfaithful to the LORD. ²⁰Then Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria marched against him and, so far from assisting him, pressed him hard. ²¹Ahaz stripped the house of the LORD, the king's palace and the houses of his officers, and gave the plunder to the king of Assyria; but all to no purpose.

²²This King Ahaz, when hard pressed, became more and more unfaithful to the LORD; ²³he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus who had defeated him and said, 'The gods of the kings of Aram helped them; I will sacrifice to them so that they may help me.' But in fact they caused his downfall and that of all Israel. ²⁴Then Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God and broke them up, and shut the doors of the house of the LORD; he made himself altars at every corner in Jerusalem, ²⁵and at every single city of Judah he made hill-shrines to burn sacrifices to other gods and provoked the anger of the LORD the God of his fathers.

²⁶ [*vv26, 27: cp 2Kgs. 16.19, 20*]The other acts and all the events of his reign, from first to last, are recorded in the annals of the kings of Judah and Israel. ²⁷So Ahaz rested with his forefathers and was buried in the city of Jerusalem, but was not given burial with the kings of Judah. He was succeeded by his son Hezekiah.

The kings of Judah from Hezekiah to the exile

29¹ [*vv1, 2: cp 2Kgs. 18.1-3*]**HEZEKIAH WAS TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OLD** when he came to the throne, and he reigned in Jerusalem for twenty-nine years; his mother was Abijah daughter of Zechariah. ²He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, as David his forefather had done.

³In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the gates of the house of the LORD and repaired them. ⁴He brought in the priests and the Levites and gathered them together in the square on the east side, ⁵and said to them, 'Levites, listen to me. Hallow yourselves now, hallow the house of the LORD the God of your fathers, and remove the pollution from the sanctuary. ⁶For our forefathers were unfaithful and did what was wrong in the eyes of the LORD our God: they forsook him, they would have nothing to do with his dwelling-place, they turned their backs on it. ⁷They shut the doors of the porch and extinguished the lamps, they ceased to burn incense and offer whole-offerings in the sanctuary to the God of Israel. ⁸Therefore the anger of the LORD fell upon Judah and Jerusalem and he made them repugnant, an object of horror and derision, as you see for yourselves. ⁹Hence it is that our fathers have fallen by the

sword, our sons and daughters and our wives are in captivity. ¹⁰Now I intend that we should pledge ourselves to the LORD the God of Israel, in order that his anger may be averted from us. ¹¹So, my sons, let no time be lost; for the LORD has chosen you to serve him and to minister to him, to be his ministers and to burn sacrifices.'

¹²Then the Levites set to work – Mahath son of Amasai and Joel son of Azariah of the family of Kohath; of the family of Merari, Kish son of Abdi and Azariah son of Jehalelel; of the family of Gershon, Joah son of Zimmah and Eden son of Joah; ¹³of the family of Elizaphan, Shimri and Jeiel; of the family of Asaph, Zechariah and Mattaniah; ¹⁴of the family of Heman, Jehiel and Shimei; and of the family of Jeduthun, Shemaiah and Uzziel. ¹⁵They assembled their kinsmen and hallowed themselves, and then went in, as the king had instructed them at the LORD's command, to purify the house of the LORD. ¹⁶The priests went inside to purify the house of the LORD; they removed all the pollution which they found in the temple into the court of the house of the LORD, and the Levites took it from them and carried it outside to the gorge of the Kidron. ¹⁷They began the rites on the first day of the first month, and on the eighth day they reached the porch; then for eight days they consecrated the house of the LORD, and on the sixteenth day of the first month they finished. ¹⁸Then they went into the palace and said to King Hezekiah, 'We have purified the whole of the house of the LORD, the altar of whole-offering with all its vessels, and the table for the Bread of the Presence arranged in rows with all its vessels; ¹⁹and we have put in order and consecrated all the vessels which King Ahaz cast aside during his reign, when he was unfaithful. They are now in place before the altar of the LORD.'

²⁰Then King Hezekiah rose early, assembled the officers of the city and went up to the house of the LORD. ²¹They brought seven bulls, seven rams, and seven lambs for the whole-offering [for the whole-offering: *prob. rdg, Heb omitted*], and seven he-goats as a sin-offering for the kingdom, for the sanctuary, and for Judah; these he commanded the priests of Aaron's line to offer on the altar of the LORD. ²²So the bulls were slaughtered, and the priests took their blood and flung it against the altar; the rams were slaughtered, and their blood was flung against the altar; the lambs were slaughtered, and their blood was flung against the altar. ²³Then the he-goats for the sin-offering were brought before the king and the assembly, who laid their hands on them; ²⁴and the priests slaughtered them and used their blood as a sin-offering on the altar to make expiation for all Israel. For the king had commanded that the whole-offering and the sin-offering should be made for all Israel.

²⁵He posted the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, lutes, and harps, according to the rule prescribed by David, by Gad the king's seer and Nathan the prophet; for this rule had come from the LORD through his prophets. ²⁶The Levites stood ready with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. ²⁷Hezekiah gave the order that the whole-offering should be offered on the altar. At the moment when the whole-offering began, the song to the LORD began too, with the trumpets, led by the instruments of David king of Israel. ²⁸The whole assembly prostrated themselves, the singers sang and the trumpeters sounded; all this continued until the whole-offering was complete. ²⁹When the offering was complete, the king and all his company bowed down and prostrated themselves. ³⁰And King Hezekiah and his

officers commanded the Levites to praise the LORD in the words of David and of Asaph the seer. So they praised him most joyfully and bowed down and prostrated themselves.

³¹Then Hezekiah said, 'You have now given to the LORD with open hands; approach with your sacrifices and thank-offerings for the house of the LORD.' So the assembly brought sacrifices and thank-offerings; and every man of willing spirit brought whole-offerings. ³²The number of whole-offerings which the assembly brought was seventy bulls, a hundred rams, and two hundred lambs; all these made a whole-offering to the LORD. ³³And the consecrated offerings were six hundred bulls and three thousand sheep. ³⁴But the priests were too few and could not flay all the whole-offerings; so their colleagues the Levites helped them until the work was completed and all the priests had hallowed themselves – for the Levites had been more scrupulous than the priests in hallowing themselves. ³⁵There were indeed whole-offerings in abundance, besides the fat of the shared-offerings and the drink-offerings for the whole-offerings. In this way the service of the house of the LORD was restored; ³⁶and Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced over what God had done for the people and because it had come about so suddenly.

30¹Then Hezekiah sent word to all Israel and Judah, and also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, inviting them to come to the house of the LORD in Jerusalem to keep the Passover of the LORD the God of Israel. ²The king and his officers and all the assembly in Jerusalem had agreed to keep the Passover in the second month, ³but they had not been able to keep it at that time, because not enough priests had hallowed themselves and the people had not assembled in Jerusalem. ⁴The proposal was acceptable to the king and the whole assembly. ⁵So they resolved to make a proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, that the people should come to Jerusalem to keep the Passover of the LORD the God of Israel. Never before had so many kept it according to the prescribed form. ⁶Couriers went throughout all Israel and Judah with letters from the king and his officers, proclaiming the royal command: 'Turn back, men of Israel, to the LORD the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, so that he may turn back to those of you who escaped capture by the kings of Assyria. ⁷Do not be like your forefathers and your kinsmen, who were unfaithful to the LORD the God of their fathers, so that he made them an object of horror, as you yourselves saw. ⁸Do not be stubborn as your forefathers were; submit yourselves to the LORD and enter his sanctuary which he has sanctified for ever, and worship the LORD your God, so that his anger may be averted from you. ⁹For when you turn back to the LORD, your kinsmen and your children will win compassion from their captors and return to this land. The LORD your God is gracious and compassionate, and he will not turn away from you if you turn back to him.'

¹⁰So the couriers passed from city to city through the land of Ephraim and Manasseh and as far as Zebulun, but they were treated with scorn and ridicule. ¹¹However, a few men of Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun submitted and came to Jerusalem. ¹²Further, the hand of God moved the people in Judah with one accord to carry out what the king and his officers had ordered at the LORD's command.

¹³Many people, a very great assembly, came together in Jerusalem to keep the pilgrim-feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month. ¹⁴They began by removing the altars in

Jerusalem; they removed the altars for burning sacrifices and threw them into the gorge of the Kidron. ¹⁵They killed the passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the second month; and the priests and the Levites were bitterly ashamed. They hallowed themselves and brought whole-offerings to the house of the LORD. ¹⁶They took their accustomed places, according to the direction laid down for them in the law of Moses the man of God; the priests flung against the altar the blood which they received from the Levites. ¹⁷But many in the assembly had not hallowed themselves; therefore the Levites had to kill the passover lamb for every one who was unclean, in order to hallow him to the LORD. ¹⁸For a majority of the people, many from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not kept themselves ritually clean, and therefore kept the Passover irregularly. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, 'May the good LORD grant pardon to every one ¹⁹who makes a practice of seeking guidance of God, the LORD the God of his fathers, even if he has not observed the rules for the purification of the sanctuary.' ²⁰The LORD heard Hezekiah and healed the people. ²¹And the Israelites who were present in Jerusalem kept the feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days with great rejoicing, and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD every day with unrestrained fervour [with unrestrained fervour: *prob. rdg, Heb* with powerful instruments]. ²²Hezekiah spoke encouragingly to all the Levites who had shown true understanding in the service of the LORD. So they spent the seven days of the festival sacrificing shared-offerings and making confession to [making confession to: *or* confessing] the LORD the God of their fathers.

²³Then the whole assembly agreed to keep the feast for another seven days; so they kept it for another seven days with general rejoicing. ²⁴For Hezekiah king of Judah set aside for the assembly a thousand bulls and seven thousand sheep, and his officers set aside for the assembly a thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep; and priests hallowed themselves in great numbers. ²⁵So the whole assembly of Judah, including the priests and the Levites, rejoiced, together with all the assembly which came out of Israel, and the resident aliens from Israel and those who lived in Judah. ²⁶There was great rejoicing in Jerusalem, the like of which had not been known there since the days of Solomon son of David king of Israel. ²⁷Then the priests and the Levites stood to bless the people; the LORD listened to their cry, and their prayer came to God's holy dwelling-place in heaven.

31¹When this was over, all the Israelites present went out to the cities of Judah and smashed the sacred pillars, hacked down the sacred poles and broke up the hill-shrines and the altars throughout Judah and Benjamin, Ephraim and Manasseh, until they had made an end of them. That done, the Israelites returned, each to his own patrimony in his own city.

²Then Hezekiah installed the priests and the Levites in office, division by division, allotting to each priest or Levite his own particular duty, for whole-offerings or shared-offerings, to give thanks or to sing praise, or to serve in the gates of the several quarters in the LORD's house.

³The king provided from his own resources, as the share due from him, the whole-offerings for both morning and evening, and for sabbaths, new moons, and appointed seasons, as prescribed in the law of the LORD. ⁴He ordered the people living in

Jerusalem to provide the share due from the priests and the Levites, so that they might devote themselves entirely to the law of the LORD. ⁵As soon as the king's order was issued to the Israelites, they gave generously from the firstfruits of their corn and new wine, oil and honey, all the produce of their land; they brought a full tithe of everything. ⁶The Israelites and the Judaeans living in the cities of Judah also brought a tithe of cattle and sheep, and a tithe of all produce as offerings dedicated to the LORD their God, and they stacked the produce in heaps. ⁷They began to deposit the heaps in the third month and completed them in the seventh. ⁸When Hezekiah and his officers came and saw the heaps, they blessed the LORD and his people Israel. ⁹Hezekiah asked the priests and the Levites about these heaps, ¹⁰and Azariah the chief priest, who was of the line of Zadok, answered, 'From the time when the people began to bring their contribution into the house of the LORD, they have had enough to eat, enough and to spare; indeed, the LORD has so greatly blessed them that they have this great store left over.'

¹¹Then Hezekiah ordered store-rooms to be prepared in the house of the LORD, and this was done; ¹²and the people honestly brought in their contributions, the tithe, and their dedicated gifts. The overseer in charge of them was Conaniah the Levite, with Shimei his brother as his deputy; ¹³Jehiel, Azariah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismachiah, Mahath, and Benaiah were appointed by King Hezekiah and Azariah, the chief overseer of the house of God, to assist Conaniah and Shimei his brother. ¹⁴And Kore son of Imnah the Levite, keeper of the East Gate, was in charge of the freewill offerings to God, to apportion the contributions made to the LORD and the most sacred offerings. ¹⁵Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah in the priestly cities assisted him in the fair distribution of portions to their kinsmen, young and old [*Or high and low*] alike, by divisions. ¹⁶Irrespective of their registration, shares were distributed to all males three years of age and upwards who entered the house of the LORD to take their daily part in the service, according to their divisions, as their office demanded. ¹⁷The priests were registered by families, the Levites from twenty years of age and upwards by their offices in their divisions. ¹⁸They were registered with all their dependants, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, the whole company of them, because in virtue of their permanent standing they had to keep themselves duly hallowed. ¹⁹As for the priests of Aaron's line in the common lands attached to their cities, in every city men were nominated to distribute portions to every male among the priests and to every one who was registered with the Levites.

²⁰Such was the action taken by Hezekiah throughout Judah; he did what was good and right and loyal in the sight of the LORD his God. ²¹Whatever he undertook in the service of the house of God and in obedience to the law and the commandment to seek guidance of his God, he did with all his heart, and he prospered.

32¹ [*vv1-19: cp 2Kgs. 18.13-37; Isa. 36.1-22*] After these events and this example of loyal conduct, Sennacherib king of Assyria invaded Judah and encamped against the fortified cities, believing that he could attach them to himself. ²When Hezekiah saw that he had come and was determined to attack Jerusalem, ³he consulted his civil and military officers about blocking up the springs outside the city; and they encouraged him. ⁴They gathered together a large number of people and blocked up all the springs and the

stream which flowed through the land. 'Why', they said, 'should Assyrian kings come here and find plenty of water?' ⁵Then the king acted boldly; he made good every breach in the city wall and erected towers on it; he built another wall outside it and strengthened the Millo of the city of David; he also collected a great quantity of weapons and shields. ⁶He appointed military commanders over the people and assembled them in the square by the city gate and spoke encouragingly to them in these words: ⁷'Be strong; be brave. Do not let the king of Assyria or the rabble he has brought with him strike terror or panic into your hearts. We have more on our side than he has. ⁸He has human strength; but we have the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles.' So spoke Hezekiah king of Judah, and the people were buoyed up by his words.

⁹After this, Sennacherib king of Assyria, while he and his high command were at Lachish, sent envoys to Jerusalem to deliver this message to Hezekiah king of Judah and to all the Judaeans in Jerusalem: ¹⁰'Sennacherib king of Assyria says, "What gives you confidence to stay in Jerusalem under siege? ¹¹Hezekiah is misleading you into risking death by famine or thirst where you are, when he tells you that the LORD your God will save you from the grip of the Assyrian king. ¹²Was it not Hezekiah himself who suppressed the LORD's hill-shrines and altars and told the people of Judah and Jerusalem that they must prostrate themselves before one altar only and burn sacrifices there? ¹³You know very well what I and my forefathers have done to all the peoples of the lands. Were the gods of these nations able to save their lands from me? ¹⁴Not one of the gods of these nations, which my forefathers exterminated, was able to save his people from me. Much less will your god save you! ¹⁵How, then, can Hezekiah deceive you or mislead you like this? How can you believe him, for no god of any nation or kingdom has been able to save his people from me or my forefathers? Much less will your gods save you!"'

¹⁶The envoys of Sennacherib spoke still more against the LORD God and against his servant Hezekiah. ¹⁷And the king himself wrote a letter to defy the LORD the God of Israel, in these terms: 'Just as the gods of other nations could not save their people from me, so the god of Hezekiah will not save his people from me.' ¹⁸Then they shouted in Hebrew at the top of their voices at the people of Jerusalem on the wall, to strike them with fear and terror, hoping thus to capture the city. ¹⁹They described the god [*Or gods*] of Jerusalem as being like the gods of the other peoples of the earth – things made by the hands of men.

²⁰ [*vv20-22: cp 2Kgs.19.1-37; Isa. 37.1-38*] In this plight King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz cried to heaven in prayer. ²¹So the LORD sent an angel who cut down all the fighting men, as well as the leaders and the commanders, in the camp of the king of Assyria, so that he went home disgraced to his own land. When he entered the temple of his god, certain of his own sons struck him down with their swords.

²²Thus the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from Sennacherib king of Assyria and all their enemies; and he gave them respite on every side. ²³Many people brought to Jerusalem offerings for the LORD and costly gifts for Hezekiah king of Judah. From then on he was held in high honour by all the nations.

²⁴About this time Hezekiah fell dangerously ill and prayed to the LORD; the LORD said,

'I will heal you' [I will heal you: *prob. rdg, cp 2Kgs. 20.5; Heb omitted*], and granted him a sign. ²⁵But, being a proud man, he was not grateful for the good done to him, and Judah and Jerusalem suffered for it. ²⁶Then, proud as he was, Hezekiah submitted, and the people of Jerusalem with him, and the LORD's anger did not fall on them again in Hezekiah's time.

²⁷Hezekiah enjoyed great wealth and fame [*Or riches*]. He built for himself treasuries for silver and gold, precious stones and spices, shields and other costly things; ²⁸and barns for the harvests of corn, new wine, and oil; and stalls for every kind of cattle, as well as sheepfolds. ²⁹He amassed [*prob. rdg, Heb adds cities*] a great many flocks and herds; God had indeed given him vast riches. ³⁰It was this same Hezekiah who blocked the upper outflow of the waters of Gihon and directed them downwards and westwards to the city of David. In fact, Hezekiah was successful in everything he attempted, ³¹even in the affair of the envoys sent by the king [*prob. rdg, cp 2Kgs. 20.12; Heb officers*] of Babylon – the envoys who came to inquire about the portent which had been seen in the land at the time when God left him to himself, to test him and to discover all that was in his heart.

³²The other events of Hezekiah's reign, and his works of piety, are recorded in the vision of the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz and in the annals of the kings of Judah and Israel. ³³So Hezekiah rested with his forefathers and was buried in the uppermost of the graves of David's sons; all Judah and the people of Jerusalem paid him honour when he died, and he was succeeded by his son Manasseh.

33¹ [*vv1-9: cp 2Kgs. 21.1-9*]**MANASSEH WAS TWELVE YEARS OLD** when he came to the throne, and he reigned in Jerusalem for fifty-five years. ²He did what was wrong in the eyes of the LORD, in following the abominable practices of the nations which the LORD had dispossessed in favour of the Israelites. ³He rebuilt the hill-shrines which his father Hezekiah had dismantled, he erected altars to the Baalim and made sacred poles, he prostrated himself before all the host of heaven and worshipped them. ⁴He built altars in the house of the LORD, that house of which the LORD had said, 'In Jerusalem shall my Name be for ever.' ⁵He built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD; ⁶he made his sons pass through the fire in the Valley of Ben-hinnom, he practised soothsaying, divination, and sorcery, and dealt with ghosts and spirits. He did much wrong in the eyes of the LORD and provoked his anger; ⁷and the image that he had had carved in relief he put in the house of God, the place of which God had said to David and Solomon his son, 'This house and Jerusalem, which I chose out of all the tribes of Israel, shall receive my Name for all time. ⁸I will not again displace Israel from the land which I assigned to their forefathers, if only they will be careful to observe all that I commanded them through Moses, all the law, the statutes, and the rules.' ⁹But Manasseh misled Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem into wickedness far worse than that of the nations which the LORD had exterminated in favour of the Israelites.

¹⁰The LORD spoke to Manasseh and to his people, but they paid no heed. ¹¹So the LORD brought against them the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria; they captured Manasseh with spiked weapons, and bound him with fetters, and brought him to Babylon. ¹²In his distress he prayed to the LORD his God and sought to placate him,

and made his humble submission before the God of his fathers. ¹³He prayed, and God accepted his petition and heard his supplication. He brought him back to Jerusalem and restored him to the throne; and thus Manasseh learnt that the LORD was God.

¹⁴After this he built an outer wall for the city of David, west of Gihon in the gorge, and extended it to the entrance by the Fish Gate, enclosing Ophel; and he raised it to a great height. He also put military commanders in all the fortified cities of Judah. ¹⁵He removed the foreign gods and the carved image from the house of the LORD and all the altars which he had built on the temple mount and in Jerusalem, and threw them out of the city. ¹⁶Moreover, he repaired the altar of the LORD and sacrificed at it shared-offerings and thank-offerings, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD the God of Israel. ¹⁷But the people still continued to sacrifice at the hill-shrines, though only to the LORD their God.

¹⁸The rest of the acts of Manasseh, his prayer to his God, and the discourses of the seers who spoke to him in the name of the LORD the God of Israel, are recorded in the chronicles of the kings of Israel. ¹⁹His prayer and the answer he received to it, and all his sin and unfaithfulness, and the places where he built hill-shrines and set up sacred poles and carved idols, before he submitted, are recorded in the chronicles of the seers. ²⁰So Manasseh rested with his forefathers and was buried in the garden-tomb of [the garden-tomb of: *prob. rdg, cp 2Kgs. 21.18; Heb omitted*] his family; he was succeeded by his son Amon.

²¹ [*vv21-25: cp 2Kgs. 21.19-24*] Amon was twenty-two years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned in Jerusalem for two years. ²²He did what was wrong in the eyes of the LORD as his father Manasseh had done. He sacrificed to all the images that his father Manasseh had made, and worshipped them. ²³He was not submissive before the LORD like his father Manasseh; his guilt was much greater. ²⁴His courtiers conspired against him and murdered him in his house; ²⁵but the people of the land killed all the conspirators and made his son Josiah king in his place.

34¹ [*vv1, 2: cp 2Kgs. 22.1, 2*] **JOSIAH WAS EIGHT YEARS OLD** when he came to the throne, and he reigned in Jerusalem for thirty-one years. ²He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD; he followed in the footsteps of his forefather David, swerving neither right nor left. ³In the eighth year of his reign, when he was still a boy, he began to seek guidance of the God of his forefather David; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the hill-shrines and the sacred poles, and the carved idols and the images of metal. ⁴He saw to it that the altars for the Baalim were destroyed and he hacked down the incense-altars which stood above them; he broke in pieces the sacred poles and the carved and metal images, grinding them to powder and scattering it on the graves of those who had sacrificed to them. ⁵He also burnt the bones of the priests on their altars and purged Judah and Jerusalem. ⁶In the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, and as far as Naphtali, he burnt down their houses wherever he found them; ⁷he destroyed the altars and the sacred poles, ground the idols to powder, and hacked down the incense-altars throughout the land of Israel. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

8 [vv8-32: cp 2Kgs. 22.3-23. 3] In the eighteenth year of his reign, after he had purified the land and the house, he sent Shaphan son of Azaliah and Maaseiah the governor of the city and Joah son of Joahaz the secretary of state to repair the house of the LORD his God. ⁹They came to Hilkiyah the high priest and gave him the silver that had been brought to the house of God, the silver which the Levites, on duty at the threshold, had gathered from Manasseh, Ephraim, and all the rest of Israel, as well as from Judah and Benjamin and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ¹⁰It was then handed over to the foremen in charge of the work in the house of the LORD, and these men, working in the house, used it for repairing and strengthening the fabric; ¹¹they gave it also to the carpenters and builders to buy hewn stone, and timber for rafters and beams, for the buildings which the kings of Judah had allowed to fall into ruin. ¹²⁻¹³The men did their work honestly under the direction of Jahath and Obadiah, Levites of the line of Merari, and Zechariah and Meshullam, members of the family of Kohath. These also had control of the porters and directed the workmen of every trade. The Levites were all skilled musicians, and some of them were secretaries, clerks, or door-keepers. ¹⁴When they fetched the silver which had been brought to the house of the LORD, the priest Hilkiyah discovered the book of the law of the LORD which had been given through Moses. ¹⁵Then Hilkiyah told Shaphan the adjutant-general, 'I have discovered the book of the law in the house of the LORD.' Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan, ¹⁶and he brought it to the king and reported to him: 'Your servants are doing all that was entrusted to them. ¹⁷They have melted down the silver in the house of the LORD and have handed it over to the foremen and the workmen.' ¹⁸Shaphan the adjutant-general also told the king that the priest Hilkiyah had given him a book; and he read it out in the king's presence. ¹⁹When the king heard what was in the book of the law, he rent his clothes, ²⁰and ordered Hilkiyah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Abdon son of Micah, Shaphan the adjutant-general, and Asaiah the king's attendant, ²¹to go and seek guidance of the LORD, for himself and for all who still remained in Israel and Judah, about the contents of the book that had been discovered. 'Great is the wrath of the LORD,' he said, 'and it has been poured out upon us because our forefathers did not observe the command of the LORD and do all that is written in this book.'

²²So Hilkiyah and those whom the king had instructed went to Huldah the prophetess, wife of Shallum son of Tikvah [*prob. rdg, cp 2Kgs. 22.14; Heb Tokhath*], son of Hasrah, the keeper of the wardrobe, and consulted her at her home in the second quarter of Jerusalem. ²³This is the word of the LORD the God of Israel,' she answered: 'Say to the man who sent you to me, ²⁴This is the word of the LORD: I am bringing disaster on this place and its inhabitants, fulfilling all the imprecations recorded in the book which was read in the presence of the king of Judah, ²⁵because they have forsaken me and burnt sacrifices to other gods, provoking my anger with all the idols they have made with their own hands; therefore my wrath is poured out upon this place and will not be quenched.' ²⁶This is what you shall say to the king of Judah who sent you to seek guidance of the LORD: "This is the word of the LORD the God of Israel: You have listened to my words ²⁷and shown a willing heart, you humbled yourself before God when you heard what I said about this place and its inhabitants; you humbled yourself and rent your clothes and wept before me. Because of all this [*Because of all this: prob. rdg, Heb omitted*], I for my part have heard you. This is the very word of the LORD. ²⁸Therefore, I will gather you to your forefathers, and you will be gathered to your grave in peace; you will not live to see all the disaster which I am bringing upon this place and upon its

inhabitants." ' So they brought back word to the king

²⁹Then the king sent and called all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem together, ³⁰and went up to the house of the LORD; he took with him all the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests and the Levites, the whole population, high and low. There he read them the whole book of the covenant discovered in the house of the LORD; ³¹and then, standing on the dais, the king made a covenant before the LORD to obey him and keep his commandments, his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart and soul, and so fulfil the terms of the covenant written in this book. ³²Then he swore an oath with all who were present in Jerusalem to keep the covenant [to keep the covenant: *prob. rdg, cp 2Kgs. 23.3; Heb and Benjamin*]. Thereafter the inhabitants of Jerusalem did obey the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. ³³Josiah removed all abominable things from all the territories of the Israelites, so that everyone living in Israel might serve the LORD his God. As long as he lived they did not fail in their allegiance to the LORD the God of their fathers.

35¹Josiah kept a Passover to the LORD in Jerusalem, and the passover lamb was killed on the fourteenth day of the first month. ²He appointed the priests to their offices and encouraged them to perform the service of the house of the LORD. ³He said to the Levites, the teachers of Israel, who were dedicated to the LORD, 'Put the holy Ark in the house which Solomon son of David king of Israel built; it is not to be carried about on your shoulders. Now is the time to serve the LORD your God and his people Israel: ⁴prepare yourselves by families according to your divisions, following the written instructions of David king of Israel and those of Solomon his son; ⁵and stand in the Holy Place as representatives of the family groups of the lay people, your brothers, one division of Levites to each family group. ⁶Kill the passover lamb and hallow yourselves and prepare for your brothers to fulfil the word of the LORD given through Moses.'

⁷Josiah contributed on behalf of all the lay people present thirty thousand small cattle, that is young rams and goats, for the Passover, in addition to three thousand bulls; all these were from the king's own resources. ⁸And his officers contributed willingly for the people, the priests, and the Levites. Hilkiah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, the chief officers of the house of God, gave on behalf of the priests two thousand six hundred small cattle for the Passover, in addition to three hundred bulls. ⁹And Conaniah, Shemaiah and Nethaneel his brothers, and Hashabiah, Jeiel, and Jozabad, the chiefs of the Levites, gave on behalf of the Levites for the Passover five thousand small cattle in addition to five hundred bulls.

¹⁰When the service had been arranged, the priests stood in their places and the Levites in their divisions, according to the king's command. ¹¹They killed the passover victim, and the priests flung the blood against the altar as the Levites flayed the animals. ¹²Then they removed the fat flesh [fat flesh: *or whole-offering*], which they allocated to the people by groups of families for them to offer to the LORD, as prescribed in the book of Moses; and so with the bulls. ¹³They cooked the passover victim over the fire according to custom, and boiled the holy offerings in pots, cauldrons, and pans, and served them quickly to all the people. ¹⁴After that they made the necessary preparations for themselves and the priests, because the priests of Aaron's line were engaged till nightfall in offering whole-offerings and the fat portions; so the Levites

made the necessary preparations for themselves and for the priests of Aaron's line. ¹⁵The singers, the sons of Asaph, were in their places according to the rules laid down by David and by Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, the king's seers. The door-keepers stood, each at his gate; there was no need for them to leave their posts, because their kinsmen the Levites had made the preparations for them.

¹⁶In this manner all the service of the LORD was arranged that day, to keep the Passover and to offer whole-offerings on the altar of the LORD, according to the command of King Josiah. ¹⁷The people of Israel who were present kept the Passover at that time and the pilgrim-feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days. ¹⁸No Passover like it had been kept in Israel since the days of the prophet Samuel; none of the kings of Israel had ever kept such a Passover as Josiah kept, with the priests and Levites and all Judah and Israel who were present and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ¹⁹In the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign this Passover was kept.

²⁰After Josiah had thus organized all the service of the house, Necho king of Egypt marched up to attack Carchemish on the Euphrates; and Josiah went out to confront him. ²¹But Necho sent envoys to him, saying, 'What do you want with me, king of Judah? I have no quarrel with you today, only with those with whom I am at war. God has purposed to speed me on my way, and God is on my side; do not stand in his way, or he will destroy you.' ²²Josiah would not be deflected from his purpose but insisted on fighting; he refused to listen to Necho's words spoken at God's command, and he sallied out to join battle in the vale of Megiddo. ²³The archers shot at him; he was severely wounded and told his bodyguard to carry him off. ²⁴They lifted him out of his chariot and carried him in his viceroy's chariot to Jerusalem. There he died and was buried among the tombs of his ancestors, and all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for him. ²⁵Jeremiah also made a lament for Josiah; and to this day the minstrels, both men and women, commemorate Josiah in their lamentations. Such laments have become traditional in Israel, and they are found in the written collections.

²⁶The other events of Josiah's reign, and his works of piety, all performed in accordance with what is laid down in the law of the LORD, ²⁷and his acts, from first to last, are recorded in the annals of the kings of Israel and Judah.

36¹ [*vv1-4: cp 2Kgs. 23.30-34*] **THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND** took Josiah's son Jehoahaz and made him king in place of his father in Jerusalem. ²He was twenty-three years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned in Jerusalem for three months. ³Then Necho king of Egypt deposed him and fined the country a hundred talents of silver and one talent of gold, ⁴and made his brother Eliakim king over Judah and Jerusalem in his place, changing his name to Jehoiakim; he also carried away his brother Jehoahaz to Egypt. ⁵Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned in Jerusalem for eleven years. He did what was wrong in the eyes of the LORD his God. ⁶So Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched against him and put him in fetters and took him to Babylon. ⁷He also removed to Babylon some of the vessels of the house of the LORD and put them into his own palace there. ⁸The other events of Jehoiakim's reign, including the abominations he committed, and everything of which he was held guilty, are recorded in the annals of the kings of Israel and Judah. He was succeeded by

his son Jehoiachin.

9 [vv9, 10: cp 2Kgs. 24.8-17] Jehoiachin was eight years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned in Jerusalem for three months and ten days. He did what was wrong in the eyes of the LORD. ¹⁰At the turn of the year King Nebuchadnezzar sent and brought him to Babylon, together with the choicest vessels of the house of the LORD, and made his father's brother Zedekiah king over Judah and Jerusalem.

¹¹Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned in Jerusalem for eleven years. ¹²He did what was wrong in the eyes of the LORD his God; he did not defer to the guidance of the prophet Jeremiah, the spokesman of the LORD. ¹³He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had laid on him a solemn oath of allegiance. He was obstinate and stubborn and refused to return to the LORD the God of Israel. ¹⁴All the chiefs of Judah and the priests and the people became more and more unfaithful, following all the abominable practices of the other nations; and they defiled the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. ¹⁵The LORD God of their fathers had warned them betimes through his messengers, for he took pity on his people and on his dwelling-place; ¹⁶but they never ceased to deride his messengers, scorn his words and scoff at his prophets, until the anger of the LORD burst out against his people and could not be appeased. ¹⁷ [vv17-20: cp 2Kgs. 25.1-17] So he brought against them the king of the Chaldeans, who put their young men to the sword in the sanctuary and spared neither young man nor maiden, neither the old nor the weak; God gave them all into his power. ¹⁸And he brought all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD and of the king and his officers – all these he brought to Babylon. ¹⁹And they burnt down the house of God, razed the city wall of Jerusalem and burnt down all its stately mansions and all their precious possessions until everything was destroyed. ²⁰Those who escaped the sword he took captive to Babylon, and they became slaves to him and his sons until the sovereignty passed to the Persians, ²¹while the land of Israel ran the full term of its sabbaths. All the time that it lay desolate it kept the sabbath rest, to complete seventy years in fulfilment of the word of the LORD by the prophet Jeremiah.

22 [vv22, 23: cp Ezra 1.1-3] Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, so that the word of the LORD spoken through Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the heart of Cyrus king of Persia; and he issued a proclamation throughout his kingdom, both by word of mouth and in writing, to this effect:

²³This is the word of Cyrus king of Persia: The LORD the God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he himself has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem in Judah. To every man of his people now among you I say, the LORD his God be [be: prob. rdg, cp Ezra 1.3; Heb omitted] with him, and let him go up.