

I & II Kings

Introduction

The two books of Kings, like the two books of Samuel, were originally one book. The division either came because they were too lengthy for one scroll, or the copyists felt it would be a better presentation of the material if these books were divided. A variety of sources were used in the writing of Kings. Among these: 'The Chronicles of the Kings of Judah' which is mentioned 15 times in Kings; 'The Book of the Acts of Solomon' etc. These were possibly the official annals, not to be confused with the Biblical book of Chronicles. These provided stories of kings and prophets from both Israel and Judah.

The writer judged every king based on how well that king displayed religious loyalty, the kind of loyalty shown by King David. For the writer national success depended on obedience to God. Every king in the Northern Kingdom (Israel) failed to meet the criteria which resulted in the Northern Kingdom falling at the hands of Assyria in 722.

A number of the ancient Hebrew manuscripts show no break between II Samuel and I Kings, giving rise to the thought that these books (I Samuel – II Kings) had one author. However, scholars are not in agreement concerning whether there was one editor or several. Some scholars feel that some individual stories were the work of different authors, though this might simply be based on the differing sources that were used.

The Septuagint (LXX) traditionally has considered these books (I Samuel – II Kings) as providing the complete history of Israel and Judah. These books in the Septuagint (LXX) are called 'The Books of the Kingdom' as over against the Hebrew titles of 'I & II Samuel' and 'I & II Kings.' Jerome, in the Latin Vulgate followed the Septuagint and called them I Kings, II Kings, III Kings and IV Kings.

A first reading of I Kings 1 gives the idea that the chapter belongs with II Samuel. A further study of the chapter reveals the bridge of thought and action that suitably introduces I Kings. These four books provide a continuous history which those scholars who feel there is one author emphasize.

The intent of the work was to chronicle all the events of national significance of David, Solomon and the Divided Kingdom. For easier understanding concerning the kings and their kingdoms the names of those kings who ruled over the Northern Kingdom (Israel) are written in small capitals. (JEROBOAM) and the names of the kings of the Southern Kingdom (Judah) are written in italics. (*Rehoboam*).

When the chapter divisions differ from our English Bibles the difference in the Hebrew chapters and verses will be shown as follows: [H. 5:1].

On occasion the Septuagint has additional material which will appear in bold double brackets. [[]]

*I Kings*¹

<CHAPTER 1>

A. *The Last Days of David 1:1 – 2:16*

1. *David's Incapacity 1:1 – 4*

¹ King David was old and the years had taken their toll. Even though they covered him with bedclothes he was unable to be warm. ² His courtiers ² suggested to him: “Let us look for a young virgin for your majesty. O King, let her attend to you ³ and become your nurse. ⁴ Let her snuggle up against the king that his majesty the King may be warm.” ⁵ ³ Thus they looked through the entire territory of Israel for a beautiful girl and found Abishag, a girl from Shunem ⁶ and brought her to the king. ⁴ Abishag was exquisitely beautiful and she became the king's nurse and took care of his needs, but the king had no intimate relations with her. ⁷

2. *Adonijah is Proclaimed King 1:5 – 10*

⁵ Adonijah the son of Haggith was ambitious and thought very highly of himself and boastingly said, “I will be king.” ⁸ He made chariots for himself and had horsemen ⁹ and had an escort of fifty men to accompany him as bodyguards. ¹⁰ ⁶ (His father had never on any occasion scolded ¹¹ him because of his actions by saying, “Why did you do that?” He was also a very handsome man and his mother had given birth to him after having given birth to Absalom.) ⁷ He negotiated ¹² with Joab ¹³ the son of Zeruijah and with Abiathar ¹⁴ the priest and they supported Adonijah and helped ¹⁵ him. ⁸ Zadok the priest, however, along with Benaiah the son of Jehoiada and Nathan the prophet [*who was very influential*], Shimei and Rei ¹⁶ and David's own mighty warriors did not side with Adonijah.

¹ Scholars feel I & II Samuel and I & II Kings were written as one continuing book. In ancient manuscripts there is no break between II Samuel and I Kings, nor is there a break between I & II Kings. These divisions were made much later than the time of the autographs.

² Josephus in *Antiquities* 11.3 describes them as “his physicians.”

³ The Hebrew is unclear but apparently says: “stand before you.”

⁴ LXX: “cherish him and be with him.”

⁵ LXX: “and let her excite him and be with him.” “θαχπω.” In that day if a king was sexually impotent he was also considered to be impotent in his ability to be king and the time for a change of monarch had come.

⁶ Shunem was a town in northern Israel north of the Valley of Jezreel.

⁷ TEV: “but he did not have intercourse with her.” NRSV: “and not know her sexually.”

⁸ His older brother, Absalom, had been killed. There was another son of David's who was older but had no ambition to rule. As a result, along with his high opinion of himself, he felt he deserved to become king. If primogeniture were to be followed he would very likely have become the next king.

⁹ The Hebrew is unclear. Literally: horses of horsemen.”

¹⁰ Literally: “to run before him.” NAB: “henchmen.” An alternate translation might be “out-runners.”

¹¹ LXX: “sought to control.” Literally: “pained him.” NASB: “crossed him.”

¹² Literally: “his words were with.”

¹³ Joab was David's nephew, the son of David's sister Zeruijah. He was the captain of the militia.

¹⁴ Abiathar was the sole survivor of the massacre by Saul of the House of Eli, the hereditary priest of Shiloh.

¹⁵ NIV: “they gave him their support.”

¹⁶ An alternate translation would be: “Shimei the advisor.”

⁹ Adonijah sacrificed sheep, oxen and fattened calves ¹⁷ at the Serpents Stone [*or, the Stone at Zoheleth*] which is alongside Enrogel. ¹⁸ He had invited all his brothers, (*the king's sons*) and all the royal officials of Judah, ¹⁰ but he did not invite Nathan the prophet or Benaiah or David's mighty warriors, and not his brother Solomon.

3. *The Plot in Favor of Solomon 1"11 – 14*

¹¹ Nathan said to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, "You have surely heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith has assumed the kingship without David's knowledge. ¹² Now then, take my advice. Let me advise you that you might save your own life as well as possibly saving the life of your son. ¹³ Go to the king immediately and say to him: "My lord the King, don't you recall that you swore to your servant ¹⁹ saying: 'Solomon, your son will reign after me and will be seated on my throne.' Why then is Adonijah now king? ¹⁴ Then, while you are still in the process of speaking to the King I will come in and confirm what you have said."

4. *Bathsheba Before David 1:15 – 21*

¹⁵ Bathsheba went to the king, going into his chamber. (Now the king was very old and Abishag the girl from Shunem was there taking care of the king.) ¹⁶ Bathsheba bowed and did obeisance to the king, and the king said, "What do you desire?" ¹⁷ She spoke to the king, saying: "My lord, you swore to your maidservant by the Lord your God saying 'Solomon, your son, will reign after me, and he will be seated on my throne.' ¹⁸ Yet, now be assured Adonijah is king although you, my lord, are not aware of it. ¹⁹ He has sacrificed oxen, fatted calves and sheep in abundance and has invited all the sons of the king, Abithar the priest and Joab the commander of the army, but Solomon, your servant, has not been invited. ²⁰ Be assured my lord the king that all the eyes of Israel are watching you to have you tell them who will be seated on the throne of my lord the king after him. ²⁰ ²¹ If this is not done: when my lord sleeps with his fathers, that I and my son will be treated as traitors."

5. *The Plot Develops 1:22 – 27*

²² While she was still speaking with the king Nathan the prophet entered. ²³ The king was informed: "The prophet Nathan is here." When he came into the presence of the king he bowed before the king, with his face to the ground. ²⁴ Nathan said, "My lord the king, You must have said, ²¹ 'Adonijah will reign after me, and he will be seated on my throne.'²² ²⁵ Today he has gone down and has sacrificed oxen, fatted calves and sheep in great abundance and has invited all the king's sons, Joab the commander of the army ²³ and Abiathar the priest and you may be assured that they are eating and drinking in his presence and are saying" Long live King Adonijah." ²⁶ However, I who am your servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada and your servant Solomon have not been invited. ²⁷ Can this have taken place because of a decision by my lord the king's

¹⁷ NEB: "buffaloes."

¹⁸ The stone marked the boundary between the tribal land of Benjamin and the tribal land of Judah. It is assumed that this location is now "Job's Well," south east of Jerusalem. (Bir-Aqqab) JB: {by the Sliding Stone which is beside the Fullers Spring."}

¹⁹ LXX: "κατα κυριου τον θεος."

²⁰ At this point in history it was the will of the ruling monarch not primogeniture that determined who would become king.

²¹ There is an interesting combination of Hebrew words: Rashi, Rallallig, Ralak.

²² The Hebrew can aptly be translated as Nathan asking the king if he really said Adonijah should reign.

²³ LXX: Codex L. "και τον αρχιστρατηγον Ιωαρ."

authority and have not told your servant who is to succeed you on the throne of my lord the king after him?”

6. *David Takes Decisive Action 1:28 – 40*

28 Then King David replied, “Summon Bathsheba.” She came into the king’s presence, standing before the king. 24 29 The king vowed, saying: “As surely as the Lord lives: he who has redeemed my soul from every adversity, 30 I vowed to you before the Lord the God of Israel, saying, ‘Your son Solomon will reign after me, and he will be seated on the throne in my stead. I will fulfill this oath today!’” 25 31 Bathsheba then bowed with her face to the ground, doing homage to the king, and said, “May my lord the king live forever!”

32 King David said, “Call Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada to appear in my presence!” They presented themselves before the king. 33 The king said, “Take my loyal servants (*or, soldiers*) with you and have my son Solomon ride my mule, 26 taking him down to Gihon, 27 34 and have Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there as king over Israel. 28 Then blow the trumpets (*or, rams horns*) and say ‘Long live King Solomon.’ 35 You will then escort him back so he can be seated on the throne for he is the one! I have appointed him to reign in my stead; to rule over Israel and over Judah.” 36 Benaiah the son of Jehoiada responded to the king, saying: “Amen! 29 May the Lord the God of my king declare it! 30 37 Just as the Lord had been with my lord the king may he also be with Solomon and may he cause him to be more exalted than my lord, King David.”

38 Then Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada and the Cherethites and the Pelethites 31 placed Solomon on the royal mule of King David and they led him to Gihon. 39 There Zadok the priest took a horn of oil from the sacred tent (*or, Tabernacle*) and anointed Solomon. The trumpets (*or, rams horns*) were sounded and all the people said, “Long live King Solomon.” 40 All the people accompanied Solomon, blowing pipes 32 as they rejoiced with great enthusiasm, the sound being so loud that it seemed to be earth-splitting! 33

7. *Adonijah’s Cause Collapses 1:41 - 53*

41 Adonijah and all his guests heard the sound as they were feasting. When Joab heard the sound of the trumpet he said, “What does that uproar 34 in the city mean?” 42 While he was speaking, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came and Adonijah said,

24 LXX: “ενωπιον αυτου.”

25 MFT: “As I swore to you by the Eternal, the God of Israel that your son Solomon should reign after me, and succeed me to my throne, so will I do this very day.” CB: “As the Lord lives who has ransomed my life out of all adversity, as I swore...”

26 At this time horses had begun to be used in Israel but only for driving, not for riding. To ride a mule was a sign of coming in peace on the part of the ruler.

27 Gihon was a spring about a half mile from Jerusalem. It was a major source of water for the city.

28 All persons who were anointed were thought to be sacred, chosen by God for a particular purpose.

29 LXX: “πιστωσαι.”

30 LXX: Codex L “και επορευοντω οπισω αυτου.” JB: “may Yahweh too say Amen to the words of my lord the king.”

31 The Cherethites and Pelethites were foreign mercenaries who served as David’s bodyguards.

32 LXX: “εχορουν εν ξοροις” The sort of pipes that were used at this point in history is not understood.

33 TAN: “making enough noise to shake the ground.”

34 Literally: “is the sound of the city in an uproar.”

“Come in for a man as valiant as you surely brings good news!”⁴³ Jonathan’s answer to Adonijah was: “Not at all!³⁵ Our lord, King David has made Solomon king.⁴⁴ The king has sent Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada and the Cherethites and the Pelethites, and they had him ride the king’s own royal mule.⁴⁵ Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king at Gihon; and they have returned from there which all resulted in rejoicing in the city which has developed into an uproar. That is the noise you have heard.⁴⁶ Even now Solomon is seated on the royal throne.⁴⁷ Additionally, the king’s servants have come to congratulate our lord King David, saying, ‘May God make the name of Solomon more memorable than yours’ and the king bowed himself on his bed.⁴⁸ The king said, ‘Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, who has granted³⁶ my offspring (*or, son*)³⁷ to sit on my throne today and I am seeing it with my own eyes!’”³⁸

⁴⁹ It was then that all those who were present as the guests of Adonijah trembled and fled, all going their own separate ways.⁵⁰ Adonijah was fearful of Solomon and he hurried to the [Tabernacle]³⁹ and took hold of the horns of the altar,⁴⁰ [*thereby claiming sanctuary in the Tabernacle and pleading for clemency.*]⁵¹ This was reported to Solomon: “Be assured, Adonijah fears King Solomon for he has taken hold of the horns of the altar, saying: ‘Let King Solomon first swear to me that he will not kill me, his servant with the sword.’”⁵² Solomon’s reply was: “If he behaves worthily not a hair of his head will fall to the ground, but if wickedness is found in him he will die.”⁵³ King Solomon sent for Adonijah and he was brought from the altar. He came and did obeisance to King Solomon and Solomon told him: “You may go home.”

<CHAPTER 2>

B. David’s Last Words 2:1 – 12

1. A Charge to Piety 2:1 – 4

¹ When David’s life was drawing to a close he instructed his son Solomon, saying:
² “I am about to go in the way of the earth. Be strong and demonstrate that you are a man,⁴¹
³ keeping the injunctions given you by your God. Do God’s will,⁴² keeping his laws, his statutes and rules, and pay attention to his admonitions that are written in the Law of Moses, that you might be successful in your actions where ever these might take place;⁴³
⁴ that the Lord may establish the word he spoke concerning me when he said, ‘If your sons are careful about their way of life, to walk before me in faithfulness, sincerity

³⁵ NEB: “Far otherwise.”

³⁶ LXX: “appointed” or “given.”

³⁷ Literally: “one.”

³⁸ The LXX adds: “εκ του σπερματος μου.”

³⁹ LXX adds in Codex L: “εις την σκηνην του κυριου.”

⁴⁰ The horns originally were the horns of cattle but later fashioned from the same material of which the altar was made. Since the entire altar was sacred anyone who held on to the horns or corners of the altar was presumably also sacred and therefore safe from being killed without a hearing. Cf.: Deuteronomy 19:1 – 14 which deals with the question of asylum.

⁴¹ Literally: “become a man.”

⁴² Literally: “walk in his ways.”

⁴³ LXX: “και παντα, οσα αν εντελωμαι σοι.”

and understanding, they will not fail for there will always be ruler on the throne of Israel.”⁴⁴

2. *David's Legacy of Evil 2:5 – 12*

⁵ “Moreover, you know what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, how he dealt with the two commanders of the armies of Israel and Judah: Abner the son of Ner, and Amasa the son of Jether, whom he murdered,⁴⁵ in retaliation during peace time, because of blood⁴⁶ that had been shed in war, thereby causing innocent blood to be spattered on his belt and sandals.⁴⁷ ⁶ Therefore it would be wise for you⁴⁸ not to let his head go down to Sheol (*or, the abode of the dead*) in peace.

⁷ Show kindness toward the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite⁴⁹ and let them come to meals at your table,⁵⁰ for they met me with great loyalty when I fled from your brother, Absalom.⁵¹

⁸ Shimei the Benjaminite from Bahurim is also with you. He was the one who severely cursed me repeatedly⁵² on the day I went to Mahanaim;⁵³ but when he came down to meet me at the Jordan I swore to him by the Lord, saying, ‘I will not put you to death with the sword.’⁹ Now, however, do not hold him guiltless for you are wise and you know what needs to be done to him, and you will bring his gray head down to the grave with blood.⁵⁴

¹⁰ Thereafter David slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of David.¹¹ The years that David reigned over Israel were forty. He reigned for seven years from Hebron and thirty-three years from Jerusalem.¹² Solomon was seated on the throne of his father David⁵⁵ and the kingdom was firmly established.⁵⁶

C. *Solomon Removes the Curses 2:13 – 46*

1. *Adonijah' Request 2:15 – 25*

¹⁵ It was then that Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Solomon's mother Bathsheba. She said: “Do you come peacefully?”⁵⁷ “Peacefully.” He replied. ¹⁶ I would like to speak with you.” Bathsheba's response was: “Say on!”¹⁵ Adonijah said, “You realize that the kingdom rightly is mine. All of Israel completely expected that I would be the new king who was expected to reign. The kingdom, however, was turned about and my brother received the kingdom through the work of the Lord. ¹⁶ Now: I have a request

⁴⁴ LXX: “will not be destroyed.” Literally: “there will be one of yours on the throne of Israel.”

⁴⁵ Hebrew unclear.

⁴⁶ LXX: “ζιμα αθρον.”

⁴⁷ NEB: “breaking the peace with bloody acts of war. With that blood he stained the belt about his waist and the sandals on his feet.” LXX has “my feet.” Cf.: II Samuel 3:24; 20:10. NASB: “he put the blood of war upon his belt, about his waist, and on the sandals of his feet.”

⁴⁸ NEB: “do as wisdom prompts you.”

⁴⁹ Cf.: II Samuel 17:27 – 29; 20:7 – 10;

⁵⁰ Solomon is to provide for their maintenance.

⁵¹ Cf.: II Samuel 17:21 – 24.

⁵² TAN: “he insulted me outrageously.” Cf.: II Samuel 16:5 – 19; 19:16 – 23.

⁵³ LXX: “the camp.” Mahanaim was a fortified site in Gilead which was in the area occupied by the tribe of Gad.

⁵⁴ Cf.: ANET 327a.

⁵⁵ LXX: “υιος ετων δωδεκα.”

⁵⁶ LXX: “prospered.”

⁵⁷ LXX: “Is your entrance peace?” “και προσεκυνησεν αυτη.”

to make of you and I am confident that you will not refuse me.”⁵⁸ “Say on,” Bathsheba replied. ¹⁷ Adonijah said, “I beg of you that you will ask King Solomon (he will not refuse you)⁵⁹ to give me Abishag the Shunamite as my wife.” ¹⁸ Bathsheba said, “Right, I will speak to the king on your behalf.”

¹⁹ Then Bathsheba went to speak to the king on behalf of Adonijah. The king stood and met her, bowing down to her. He then seated himself on the throne⁶⁰ and had a seat (*or, throne*) brought for the king’s mother. She was seated to his right.⁶¹ ²⁰ She then said, “I have one small request to make of you, O king, do not refuse me.⁶² Let Abishag the Shunamite be given to Adonijah your brother as his wife.” ²² King Solomon spoke to his mother, “Why do you ask for Abishag to become my brother’s wife? Why not ask for the kingdom for him? He already has Abiathar the priest and Joab the son of Zeruah on his side.⁶³ ²³ King Solomon then vowed by the Lord, saying, “God do so to me and more if bringing up this matter does not cost him his life. ²⁴ As the Lord lives, who has established me, placing me on the throne of my father David, the one who made me a house as he promised, Adonijah will be put to death today!” ²⁵ King Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada and he put Adonijah to death.⁶⁴

2. Abiathar is Banished 2:26 – 27

²⁶ The king spoke to Abiathar the priest, saying: “Go to Anathoth,⁶⁵ to your estate for you deserve death⁶⁶ I will not put you to death at this time because you helped carry the Ark of the Lord God before my father David, and because you shared in all the hardships of my father.” ²⁷ (So Solomon banished Abiathar from being a priest before the Lord. This fulfilled the word of the Lord⁶⁷ which was given concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh.)

3. The End of Joash 2:28 – 34

²⁸ When Joash received information concerning these events (for Joash had supported Adonijah although he had not supported Absalom)⁶⁸ Joab fled to the Tabernacle of the Lord and held the horns of the altar. ²⁹ When Solomon learned that Joab had fled to the Tabernacle of the Lord and was beside the altar,⁶⁹ he sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiadah⁷⁰ with the order: “Go kill him.”⁷¹ ³⁰ Benaiah came to the Tabernacle and

⁵⁸ Literally: “do not turn away my face.”

⁵⁹ Literally: “he will not turn his face from you.”

⁶⁰ This is a rarely used Hebrew word for “throne.”

⁶¹ To sit at the right of the king was a place of honor.

⁶² Literally: “turn away my face.”

⁶³ To be married to the former wife of a king provides regal status for the spouse. This would be an admission that Abiathar should have become king and had the additional credentials of having the wife of David as his wife.

⁶⁴ LXX adds: “Αδωνια εν τη ημερα εκεινη.” Cf.: ANET 251c This was the practice of a brutal age.

⁶⁵ Anathoth was a Levitical town north of Jerusalem.

⁶⁶ Literally: “are a man of death.” LXX: “a man of death.”

⁶⁷ Cf.: I Samuel 3:27 – 36; 3:14. Abiathar was a descendant of Eli.

⁶⁸ Several LXX Codices have “Σαλωμων.”

⁶⁹ LXX: “κατεχει των κερατων.”

⁷⁰ One Hebrew Ms says that Solomon sent a message to Benaiah.

⁷¹ LXX: v. 29 “This was reported to Solomon: ‘Joab has fled to the tabernacle of the Lord and be assured he has hold of the horns of the altar.’ King Solomon went to Joab, saying: ‘What has happened to you that you have fled to the altar?’ Joab replied, ‘Because I feared you and fled for refuge to the House of the Lord.’ Solomon sent word to Benaiah the son of Jehoiadah saying: ‘Go and kill him and bury him’.”

said to Joab, “The king commands that you come out.” Joab replied, “No! I will die here.” Benaiah reported to the king saying: “Joab told me that he will not come out “³¹ The king then ordered: “Kill him there and bury him. This will take away the guilt from me and from my father’s house for the blood Joab shed without any cause.³² The Lord will cause his bloody⁷² deeds to be laid upon his own head because he killed with his sword without the knowledge [*or, permission*] of my father David for he killed two who were more righteous and honorable than himself: Abner the son of Ner who was the commander of the Army of Israel and Amasa the son of Jether who was the commander of the Army of Judah.³³ In this way the blood will come on the head of Joab and upon his descendants forever, and the Lord will see that there will never be peace within his house.”³⁴ Then Benaiah the son of Jehoiadah went and struck Joab, killing him and he was buried on his own property⁷³ in the wilderness.³⁵ The king appointed Benaiah the son of Jehoiadah over the armies in place of Joab, and he appointed Zadok the priest to take the place of Abiathar.⁷⁴

4. *The End of Shimei 2:36 – 46*

³⁶ The king then summoned Shimei and said, “Build a house for yourself in Jerusalem and live there, and do not leave to go anywhere,⁷⁵ ³⁷ for on the day that you leave Jerusalem, going beyond the Wadi Kidron, understand clearly that you will die! Your blood will be on your own head!”⁷⁶ ³⁸ Shimei answered the king, saying: “Your stipulations as stated by my lord the king are fair. I will be obedient.” Shimei lived in Jerusalem a long time.

³⁹ It happened that after three years of living in Jerusalem two of Shimei’s slaves ran away to Achish son of Maacah the king of Gath.⁷⁷ When he was told, “Your slaves are in Gath,”⁴⁰ Shimei got up, saddled his donkey and went to Gath to Achish, to find his slaves. Shimei left and returned to Jerusalem from Gath with his slaves.⁴¹ When Solomon was told⁷⁸ that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and returned,⁴² Shimei was summoned to appear before the king who said: “Did I not make you swear by the Lord and solemnly admonish you that you can be assured that the day you leave Jerusalem and go anywhere else you will die? Didn’t you agree and say ‘Your stipulation is fair and I will be obedient?’⁴³ Why then, did you leave and not keep your word to the Lord and obey the stipulation that I gave you?”⁷⁹ ⁴⁴ The king added: “You know in your heart⁸⁰ all of the evil that you did toward my father David and the Lord will bring back our evil on your head.⁴⁵ But King Solomon will be blessed and the throne of David will be established before the Lord forever!”⁴⁶ The king commanded

⁷² LXX: “το αιμα της αδικας αυτου.” “the blood of his unrighteousness.”

⁷³ Literally: “in his own house.” LXX: his own tomb.”

⁷⁴ The LXX provides a variant text. ³⁵: “The king appointed Benaniah the son of Jehoiada in his place over the army and the kingdom was established in Jerusalem an as for Zadok the priest the king appointed him to be the High Priest in the room of Abithar. Solomon the son of David ruled over Israel, Judah from Jerusalem and the Lord gave him much wisdom, understanding and kind concern for those over which he ruled.” An appendix to the chapter provides the additional verses of chapter 2 in the LXX.

⁷⁵ This was tantamount to house arrest.

⁷⁶ The LXX adds: “και ωρκισεν αυτον ο Βασιλευς εν τη ημερα εκεινη.”

⁷⁷ Gath was a Philistine city.

⁷⁸ LXX: “κει απ εστρεψεν τους δουλλους αυτοοοον.”

⁷⁹ Literally: “that I commanded.”

⁸⁰ Literally: “your heart acknowledges.”

Benadiah the son of Jehoiadah and he went out and struck the death blow to Shimei. It was in this manner that the kingdom was established under the rule of Solomon.⁸¹

<CHAPTER 3>⁸²

II The Reign of Solomon 3:1 – 11:43

A. Solomon's Wisdom and Splendor 3:1 – 4:30

1. Solomon's Choice 3:1 – 15

¹ Solomon made a marriage alliance⁸³ with Pharaoh King of Egypt. He took Pharaoh's daughter,⁸⁴ bringing her to the city of David until he had finished building his palace, the house of the Lord and the city wall of Jerusalem.⁸⁵ ² [People were sacrificing at the high places (*or, local hill shrines*)⁸⁶ because no house for the Name of the Lord had been built.]⁸⁷

² Solomon loved the Lord and sought to live by the statutes of the Lord as his father David had done. He did, however, slaughter and burn sacrifices at the high places (*or, local hill shrines*).⁸⁸ ⁴ The king⁸⁹ went to Gibeon in order to sacrifice for the largest altar (*shrine*) was located there. Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.⁹⁰ ⁵ The Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream at Gibeon by night and said:⁹¹ "Ask what I should grant you." ⁶ Solomon said, "You have been most gracious and steadfast in your love toward my father David because he walked before you in faithfulness and in righteousness. He possessed integrity toward you and you have remained faithful to him with your great and steadfast love. You have given him a son to be seated on his throne at this time."⁹² ⁷ Now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a small child, and I am not skilled as a ruler.⁹³ ⁸ Your servant is in the midst of your chosen people, a great nation with a population that cannot be counted for it is such a multitude. ⁹ Because of this, grant your servant an understanding mind⁹⁴ that I might govern your people;⁹⁵ that I may discern between good and evil, for who has the ability to govern this great⁹⁶ nation?"

⁸¹ Solomon now was in complete control.

⁸² Some scholars insert 4:20, 25, 24 between chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 3:1 is inserted by some scholars after 4:24

⁸³ Literally: "made himself a son-in-law of Pharaoh." The Pharaoh might possibly be Pharaoh Pausonnis II who was the last ruler of the XXI Dynasty.

⁸⁴ LXX adds: "εδ υτω εις γυναικα."

⁸⁵ Cf.: ANET 258b.

⁸⁶ These shrines were considered, by the populace, to be legitimate until the reform of Josiah 18:23.

⁸⁷ Some scholars feel this verse is a later interpolation.

⁸⁸ Literally: "causing to smoke by burning the offerings." This is not a reference to burning incense.

⁸⁹ LXX adds: "arose and went." "και α νεστη."

⁹⁰ Possibly this is the total number of sacrifices from first to last.

⁹¹ Cf.: ANET 32a, 246d, 334b. Cf. also: II Chronicles 1:7 – 13.

⁹² MFT: "thou hast reserved this great boon for him, a son to sit on his throne this day."

⁹³ Literally: "I do not know to go out and come in." The LXX considers Solomon to be twelve years of age. Josephus in *Antiquities* VIII, 7, 8 makes him fourteen and he reigns for 80 years. He would surely be not over twenty years of age based on II Samuel 12:24.

⁹⁴ Literally: "a hearty heart hearing." MFT: "a thoughtful mind for governing thy people, that I may distinguish right from wrong."

⁹⁵ The LXX adds: "to judge." "εν δικαιοσυνη."

⁹⁶ Literally: "heavy."

10 The Lord was pleased that Solomon made that request. 11 God spoke to him, saying: “Because you have asked this and have not asked selfishly for long life or riches or death for your enemies, but have asked for an understanding mind so you would be able to hear and judge,⁹⁷ 12 be assured that based on your desire you will have a discerning mind⁹⁸ so you can dispense justice in a manner that has never been seen before nor in the future. 13 I will give you not only what you requested but will also give what you did not request: riches and honor, so that through your entire life no other king will be found comparable in making decisions that are just. 14 In addition, if you are obedient to my ways, keep my statutes and commandments as did your father David I will give you a long life.”

15 Solomon woke and realized that this was a dream.⁹⁹ He then returned to Jerusalem and [*going into the Tabernacle*] he stood¹⁰⁰ before the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord and offered burnt offerings, peace offerings and provided a banquet for all his courtiers.

2. *The Judgment of Solomon 3:16 – 28*

16 Later two prostitutes came to the king and stood before him. 17 The one woman said, “Oh my lord, this woman and I lived in the same house. I gave birth to a child while she lived in the house. 18 Three days later she gave birth also and we were the only ones who were alone in the house – just the two of us. 19 This woman’s son died during the night because while she slept with it she rolled over on it, smothering it.¹⁰¹ 20 She got up during the night and placed her dead son next to my breast and took my son and placed it next to her breast while I, your servant, was sleeping. 21 When I was ready to nurse my child I discovered it to be dead. As I examined the child closely in the morning light I realized that this was not the child that I had given birth to.” 22 The other woman interrupted, saying: “No! The living child is mine! The dead child is yours!” The first woman responded: “No! The dead child is yours and the living one is mine!” They kept on arguing in this way in the presence of the king.

23 The king then said: “This one says ‘This is my son that is alive and your son is dead.’ The other one says ‘No! Your son is dead and my son is alive’.” 24 The king said: “Bring me a sword!” A sword was brought to the king. 25 The king ordered: “Cut the child¹⁰² in two and give one half to each woman.” 26 Then the woman whose son was alive was moved with compassion for her son and said to the king: “Oh my lord, give her the living child. By all means --- do not kill the child!” The other woman said, “It will be neither mine nor yours! Divide it!” 27 Then the king spoke: “Give the child to the first woman!¹⁰³ Do not kill it under any circumstances! She is the mother.”

⁹⁷ In other Middle-Eastern kingdoms at that time the king would cast lots to determine justice. This was considered to be ‘the sacred lot.’

⁹⁸ NIV: “heart.”

⁹⁹ LXX adds: “και ανεστη,”

¹⁰⁰ LXX adds: “the altar that was in front of the Ark.” “καταπροσωπεν του θυσιαστηριου του,”

¹⁰¹ LXX: “she slept on it.” TEV: “then one night she accidentally rolled over on her baby and smothered it.”

¹⁰² LXX: “the suckling.”

¹⁰³ LXX: “Δοτε το πατδιον τη ειπουση.”

28 All the people of Israel learned of the judgment that was made and were in awe of the king because they realized that he possessed wisdom that came from God who was with him when he meted out justice. ¹⁰⁴

<CHAPTER 4> ¹⁰⁵

3. *Solomon's Court Officials 4:1 – 6*

¹ King Solomon ruled over all of Israel. ² These were his high officials: Azariah son of Zadok was the priest; ³ Elihoreph and Ahijah sons of Shisha were secretaries; Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was recorder; ⁴ Benaiah son of Jehoiada was in command of the army; Zadok and Abiathar were priests; ⁵ Azariah son of Nathan was over the officials; Zabud son of Nathan was priest and the king's friend; ⁶ Ahishar was in charge of the palace; and Adoniram son of Abda was in charge of the forced labor. ¹⁰⁶

4. *Solomon's Provincial Administrators 4:7 – 19*

⁷ Solomon had twelve administrators over all of Israel. These provided food for the king and his household; each one had to make provision for one month in the year. ⁸ Their names were: Ben-hur, in the hill country of Ephraim; ⁹ Ben-deker, in Makaz, Shaalbim, ¹⁰⁷ Beth-shemesh, and Elon-beth-hanan; ¹⁰ Ben-hesed, in Arubboth (to him belonged ¹⁰⁸ Socoh and all the land of Hopher); ¹¹ Ben-abinadab, in all Naphath-dor (he had Taphath, Solomon's daughter, as his wife); ¹² Baana son of Ahilud, in Taanach Megiddo, and all Beth-shean, which is beside Zarethan below Jezreel, and from Beth-shean to Abel-meholah, as far as the other side of Jokmeam; ¹³ Ben-geber, in Ramoth-gilead (he had the villages of Jair son of Manasseh, which are in Gilead, and he had the region of Argob, which is in Bashan, sixty great cities with walls and bronze bars), ¹⁴ Ahinadab son of Iddo, in Mahanaim; ¹⁵ Ahimaaz, in Naphtali, (he had taken Basemath, Solomon's daughter, as his wife), ¹⁶ Baana son of Hushai, in Asher and Bealoth; ¹⁰⁹ ¹⁷ Jehoshaphat son of Paruah, in Isachar; ¹⁸ Shimei son of Ela, in Benjamin; ¹⁹ Geber ¹¹⁰ son of Uri, in the land of Gilead; the country of King Sihon of the Amorites and of King Og of Bashan,. There was one official in Judah. ¹¹¹

5. *The Splendor of Solomon 4:20 – 28 [H.4:20 - 5:8]*

²⁰ The inhabitants of Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand of the sea. They had ample food and drink and were content. ²¹ [H. 5:1] The rule of Solomon extended from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt. ¹¹² Nations brought tribute to Solomon and were his subjects all the days of his life. ¹¹³

¹⁰⁴ There is a similar story of a Thracian king who was to decide between three men who claimed to be the sons of a deceased Cimmerian king. He ordered that they each pierce the body of the deceased king with a spear. One refused and he was declared to be the son of the deceased king.

¹⁰⁵ The LXX seems to have a somewhat different list of court officers and governors. Some scholars feel this list is based on the end of Solomon's reign. This however is unable to be proven. Other scholars feel the list in the LXX is more accurate than the Hebrew list.

¹⁰⁶ LXX Codex L adds: "and Elias the chief steward, and Elia the son of Saph was over the family."

¹⁰⁷ LXX: "Βηθσαλαμιμ."

¹⁰⁸ LXX: "αυτη των δωρων και της τοπαρχια αυτου."

¹⁰⁹ LXX Codex A: "και εν Μααλορ."

¹¹⁰ LXX Codices B & L have: "του Εσεβον."

¹¹¹ Some translators insert 4>7 – 8 here as an interpolation.

¹¹² The border of Egypt was Wadi el 'Aresh, about half way between Gaza and Sinai.

¹¹³ Some scholars insert verses 27 - 28 here for a better read.

22 [H. 5:2] Solomon's daily provisions included thirty cors (*kors*)¹¹⁴ of semolina flour, sixty cors (*kors*) of finely pounded flour (*or, meal*); 23 [H. 5:3] ten choice fat steers; twenty head of grass-fed cattle, a hundred sheep and additionally deer, gazelles; roebucks and plump poultry.¹¹⁵ 24 [H. 5:4] He ruled over the entire territory of the Trans-Euphrates:¹¹⁶ from Tiphseh to Gaza, having all the local kings in the area of the Trans-Euphrates as his subjects and he was praised by all those around him. 25 [H. 5:5] Those who lived in Judah and Israel, from Dan to Beer-sheba, lived in safety, everyone under his vine and under his fig tree during the rule of Solomon. 26 [H. 5:6] Solomon had forty-thousand stalls¹¹⁷ for horses for his chariots and twelve thousand charioteers.¹¹⁸ 27 [H. 5:7] The administrators supplied the provisions for King Solomon and for all who came to partake of his food. Each one supplied food for one month and there was always an abundant supply.¹¹⁹ 28 [H. 5:8] Barley and straw were also provided, as required, for the horses and the fast horses used by messengers.

6. *Solomon's Surpassing Wisdom 4:29 – 34 [H. 5:9 – 14]*

29 [H. 5:9] God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding that was far greater than others received. His mind seemed as great as the sand of the seashore. 30 [H. 5:10] The wisdom of Solomon surpassed the wisdom of all others in the east and was also beyond the wisdom of Egypt. 31 [H. 5:11] He was wiser than the wise men: namely, Ethan the Ezrahite,¹²⁰ Heman, Caleol and Darda the sons of Mahol, and wiser than people from all the surrounding nations. 32 [H. 5:12] He also spoke three thousand proverbs and wrote one thousand and five songs.³³ [H. 5:13] He was able to discourse about all of the trees, from the cedars of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows in the crack between the stones in a wall. He could also talk at length about animals, birds, reptiles and fish. 34 [H. 5:14] People came from all the surrounding nations to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Even the kings of the nations were attentive to his wisdom.¹²¹

¹¹⁴ Over the years scholars have debated the volume of a Hebrew cor (*kor*). Sizes scholars have suggested range from 10 bushels to 6.524 bushels. The latter is the most recent determination of volume by Dr. Bruce Metzger.

¹¹⁵ TAN: "geese."

¹¹⁶ Literally: "beyond the river" but the meaning was from the river to the west and south. Usually the expression "beyond the river" meant to the east, the area that now includes Iraq and Iran. LXX: "on this side of the river."

¹¹⁷ One Hebrew Ms. has "four thousand."

¹¹⁸ Literally: "horsemen." TEV: "cavalry horses."

¹¹⁹ CB: "and they fell short of nothing."

¹²⁰ Psalm 89 is attributed to him.

¹²¹ The LXX inserts 3:1 here with the following addition: "Pharaoh the king of Egypt took Gaza and burned it, and the Canaanite houses in the Negeb, Pharaoh gave these as a dowry to his daughter, the wife of Solomon. She rebuilt Gaza."

<CHAPTER 5>

B, Erecting the Temple 5:1 – 7:51

1, Preparation for Building the Temple 5:1-18

¹ [H. 5:15] Hiram ¹²² king of Tyre ¹²³ sent his ambassador to Solomon ¹²⁴ when he heard that they had consecrated him as king in place of his father; for Hiram always loved David. ² [H. 5:16] Solomon sent word to Hiram saying: ³ [H. 5:17] “You know that David my father could not build a house for the name of the Lord his God because of the wars that were waged against enemies ¹²⁵ who surrounded him, and the Lord subdued them. ¹²⁶ ⁴ [H. 5:18] Now, however, the Lord my God has given me peace and there are no adversaries nor are there any misfortunes. ¹²⁷ ⁵ [H. 5:19] I intend to build a house for the name of the Lord my God, as the Lord said to David my father ‘Your son will sit on your throne in your place. He will build the house in my name.’ ⁶ [H. 5:20] Therefore I request that cedars from Lebanon ¹²⁸ be cut for me; and my subjects will join your subjects, and I will pay your subjects equal wages, for you know that there is no one among us who knows how to cut timber like the Sidonians.

⁷ [H. 5:21] When Hiram heard the words of Solomon he was exceedingly glad and said “Blessed be the Lord ¹²⁹ this day, who has given David a wise son to be his successor to rule the nation.” ⁸ [H. 5:22] Hiram sent word to Solomon saying, ‘I have heard the message which you have sent to me. I will do everything you request regarding cedar and cypress timber. ¹³⁰ ⁹ [H. 5:23] My subjects will bring the timbers down to the sea from Lebanon, and I will make the timber into rafts so it can be sent by sea to any place you desire. I will have the rafts broken up there ¹³¹ and you will receive the timber and you will meet my wishes by providing food for my household.’ ¹⁰ [H. 5:24] It was in this manner that Hiram provided all the timber: cedar and cypress that was needed. ¹³² ¹¹ [H. 5:25] While Hiram supplied Solomon with timber Solomon in turn supplied Hiram with twenty thousand cors (*or, kors*) of wheat ¹³³ for his household and twenty thousand cors (*kors*) of

¹²² The name Hiram varies. It is based on a Hebrew word: “**mrixa**.” The meaning was “the brother of Ram (the lofty one).”

¹²³ Tyre means “rock.” The rock was one mile long by three-quarters of a mile wide, providing for a double port.

¹²⁴ LXX: “Hiram the king of Tyre sent his servants to anoint Solomon in the room of David his father because Hiram always loved David.” The Tel-el-Amarna letters convey the idea that this was the means by which recognition was given to a new king by a neighboring kingdom.

¹²⁵ LXX: “from the face of wars.” Targum: “because of enemies.”

¹²⁶ So: Vulgate. LXX: “steps.” Hebrew: “put under the soles of my (*or, his*) feet.”

¹²⁷ TAN: “There is no adversary and no mischance.” The Hebrew word translated as “misfortunes” is “evil enemies.” Hebrew: literally: “all his share.”

¹²⁸ Pliny says that the cedar roof on the temple of Diana of Ephesus lasted 400 years. Cedar: LXX: “ξυλα.”

¹²⁹ LXX: “the God of Israel.”

¹³⁰ Translators use various names for the Hebrew word translated as “cypress” here. These include, among others, fir, pine, or juniper.

¹³¹ LXX: “shake them off there.”

¹³² TAN: “My servants will bring them down to the sea from the Lebanon: and at the sea I will make them into floats and [*deliver them*] to any place that you designate to me. There I shall break up for you to carry away.”

¹³³ So: LXX, Syriac and II Chronicles 2:10. Hebrew: “twenty” Cf.: footnote 114.

beaten oil ¹³⁴ which was provided annually. ¹² [H. 5:26] (The Lord had given Solomon wisdom and the promise that there would be an alliance between Hiram and Solomon.)
¹³⁵

¹³ [H. 5:27] King Solomon required conscripted laborers coming from all parts of Israel and those who were conscripted numbered thirty thousand men. ¹⁴ [H. 5:28] He sent ten thousand a month, sending them in relays so the workers would be working in Lebanon one month and then be in their home communities for two months before returning to their work in Lebanon. Adoniram was in charge of these conscripted laborers. ¹⁵ [H. 5:29] Solomon also had seventy-five thousand porters (*or, burden bearers*), eighty thousand quarriers (*or, stone cutters*) in the hill country. ¹⁶ [H. 5:30] In addition Solomon had three thousand two hundred foremen who superintended the work gangs doing the work. ¹⁷ [H. 5:31] At the king's command huge and costly stones were quarried in order to lay the foundation of the building with dressed stones. ¹³⁶ ¹⁸ [H. 5:32] Solomon's and Hiram's builders along with the men of Gebal ¹³⁷ shaped the stones and prepared the timbers that the temple might be built.

<CHAPTER 6>

2. The Temple Edifices 6:1 – 38

¹ [In the four hundred eightieth year ¹³⁸ after the people of Israel left the land of Egypt, during the fourth year of King Solomon's reign in Israel, in the month of Ziv ¹³⁹ which is the second month, he began to build the house of the Lord.] ¹⁴⁰ ² The house of the Lord built by King Solomon was sixty cubits (*or, 90 feet*) long, ¹⁴¹ twenty cubits (*or, 30 feet*) wide, and thirty cubits (*or, 45 feet*) high. ³ The portico in the front ¹⁴² of the house was twenty cubits (*or, 30 feet*) long, equal to the width of the house, and ten cubits (*or, 15 feet*) deep at the front of the house. ⁴ The windows of the house were recessed. ¹⁴³ ⁵ Side chambers were built around the outside walls of both the nave and the inner sanctuary (*or shrine*) of the building. ¹⁴⁴ ⁶ The lowest story was five cubits (*or, 7 ½ feet*) wide, the middle story six cubits (*9 feet*) wide, and the top story was seven cubits (*10 ½*

¹³⁴ The LXX has a different number for the olive oil. The word used is a different measure used in Israel / Judah: "bath." Beaten oil was the finest that was produced.

¹³⁵ NRSV: "There was peace between Hiram and Solomon and the two of them made a treaty." Literally: "cut a treaty." Cf. Jeremiah 34:18. A calf is cut in half to ratify a treaty.

¹³⁶ MFT: "dressed the stones and ran a grooved edge round them."

¹³⁷ Gebal was situated on the slope of the Phoenician coast, modern Jebel. It was noted for its ship building and its craftsmen.

¹³⁸ Apparently twelve generations. Some Hebrew Mss and the LXX have "440th year."

¹³⁹ This was the eighth month in the pre-exilic calendar. After the exile it became the 2nd month in the post-exilic calendar. Mid-April to Mid-May.

¹⁴⁰ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation. In the LXX this verse is inserted 2 verses earlier (in chapter 5) and verses 37 & 38 are found here.

¹⁴¹ A cubit was the distance from one's finger tip to one's elbow or about 1 ½ feet.

¹⁴² TAN: "The Great Hall of the house." JB: "Ulam in front of the Hekal."

¹⁴³ In verses 4 – 6 from time to time the meaning of the Hebrew is unclear. NAB: "splayed windows with trellises." Possibly: "narrow recessed openings." LXX: "secret windows inclining inward." Possibly the openings of the windows were wider on the inside and narrower at the outside wall. MFT: "windows with gratings."

¹⁴⁴ The Hebrew is unclear. The Targum describes it as a three story building which was on three sides of the temple. TEV: "a three story annex."

feet) wide. This was built around the outside of the house with offsets on the wall so that no supporting girders were inserted in the wall of the house of the Lord. ¹⁴⁵

⁷ [(When the house was being constructed dressed stone, which had already been dressed at the quarry was used. During the building there was not the sound of a hammer or axe or any other iron tool. No such sounds were heard during the construction.)] ¹⁴⁶

⁸ The entrance to the lower story ¹⁴⁷ was at the right (*or, south*) side of the building. A winding staircase ¹⁴⁸ led to the middle story and on to the third story. ⁹ The house was built and finished on the inside with planks ¹⁴⁹ of cedar. ¹⁰ The structure was built alongside the entire house of the Lord, five cubits (*7 1/2 feet*) high and joined to the house with timbers of cedar.

¹¹ The word of the Lord came to Solomon: ¹² “Concerning this house which you are building, if you obediently follow my statutes, obey my ordinances and keep all my commandments I will establish the same relationship with you as I established with your father David ¹⁵⁰ ¹³ I will constantly be in the midst of the children of Israel and never forsake my people, Israel.”

¹⁴ Solomon built the house --- to its completion. ¹⁵ He paneled the inside walls of the house with cedar boards from the floor to the ceiling rafters, ¹⁵¹ covering them with wood. The floor of the house was covered with cypress planks. ¹⁶ He partitioned off twenty cubits (*or, thirty feet*) within the rear of the house with cedar boards from the floor to the ceiling and in it built an inner sanctuary, namely the Holy of Holies. ¹⁷ The nave in the front of the sanctuary was forty cubits (*or, sixty feet*) long. ¹⁵² ¹⁸ The cedar walls were carved with bas relief depictions of gourds and open flowers (*or, calyxes*). Stones were not visible. ¹⁵³ ¹⁹ The Holy of Holies was placed in the innermost portion of the house in order to house the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord. ²⁰ The inner sanctuary ¹⁵⁴ was twenty cubits (*or, thirty feet*) long, twenty cubits (*or, thirty feet*) wide, and twenty cubits (*or, thirty feet*) high. It was overlaid with pure ¹⁵⁵ gold. He also made an altar of cedar. ²¹ Solomon overlaid the entire inside of the house with pure gold and made gold chains that were across the entrance of the Holy of Holies ¹⁵⁶ which was overlaid with gold. ²² He overlaid the entire house with gold until the work was completed. Additionally the entire inner sanctuary (*or, the Holy of Holies*) was overlaid with gold.

²³ Two cherubim were made for the inner sanctuary, each being ten cubits (*or, fifteen feet*) tall. ²⁴ The length of one wing of these cherubim was five cubits (*or, seven*

¹⁴⁵ LB: “beams resting on blocks built out from the wall --- so the beams were not inserted into the walls themselves.”

¹⁴⁶ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

¹⁴⁷ So: LXX. Hebrew: “middle.”

¹⁴⁸ JB, MFT: “trapdoor.” CB: “a circular trapdoor.”

¹⁴⁹ Hebrew uncertain. Literally: “rows.” Some scholars place v. 9 after v. 10 and change the order of the verses as follows: 8, 10, 9, 15 – 17, 20, 21, 23, 26, 24, 25, 27, 28, 31.

¹⁵⁰ Some scholars feel that verses 11 – 14 are a later interpolation.

¹⁵¹ So: LXX. “των φοκων και εως των τοιχιων,” Hebrew: “walls.”

¹⁵² The Hebrew in this portion of the chapter is rather unclear.

¹⁵³ Cf.: ANET 375d.

¹⁵⁴ So: versions. Hebrew: “before the inner sanctuary.”

¹⁵⁵ NEB: “red gold.”

¹⁵⁶ The purpose of the gold chains is unclear. Presumably they were to protect the entrance to the inner sanctuary (*or, Holy of Holies*), or to warn those in the main sanctuary that that area was ‘off limits’ for entrance. ANET 175c.

and a half feet). Each of the wings of the cherubim was that size, making the span of the wings on each cherub to be ten cubits (*or, fifteen feet*).²⁵ The two cherubim were identical, having the same measurements and shapes.²⁶ Their height was ten cubits (*or, fifteen feet*).²⁷ The cherubim were placed¹⁵⁷ in the innermost sanctuary (*or, Holy of Holies*) of the house. Their wings were spread out so that the wing of one cherub touched one wall and the wing of the other cherub touched the opposite wall. Their other wings touched one another in the middle of the room.¹⁵⁸²⁸ He also overlaid the cherubim with gold.

²⁹ All the walls were carved in bas relief with figures of cherubim, palm trees and open flowers (*or, calyxes*).¹⁵⁹ This was done in both the inner and outer sanctuaries.³⁰ The floor of the house was also overlaid with gold in the inner and outer rooms.¹⁶⁰

³¹ For the entrance he made doors of olivewood and the lintels and doorposts were five-sided.¹⁶¹³² He covered the two doors that were made of olivewood with bas relief carvings of cherubim, palm trees and open flowers (*or, calyxes*), all of which were overlaid with gold.

³³ The entrance to the nave he made with olive wood, having square doorposts,¹⁶²³⁴ and two doors of cypress wood,¹⁶³ both of which had two leaves which could fold.¹⁶⁴³⁵ These were also carved with cherubim, palm trees and open flowers (*or, calyxes*) all of which was overlaid with gold including the carvings.³⁶ He built the inner court with three courses of stone and one course of cedar beams.¹⁶⁵

³⁷ In the fourth year the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid in the month of Ziv.¹⁶⁶³⁸ In the eleventh year in the month of Bul, which is the eighth month,¹⁶⁷ the house was completely finished, meeting all the specifications. The building time was seven years.¹⁶⁸

<CHAPTER 7>

5. The Palace Buildings 7:1 – 12

¹ Solomon was building his own house which took thirteen years until it was completed.

² He built the Lebanon Forest House,¹⁶⁹ its length being one hundred cubits (*or, one hundred fifty feet*), its width fifty cubits (*or, seventy five feet*), and its height thirty cubits (*or, forty five feet*). It was built using three¹⁷⁰ rows of columns with hewn beams

¹⁵⁷ LXX: “και αμφυτερα.”

¹⁵⁸ Literally: “house.”

¹⁵⁹ The reference to the open flowers was omitted in the LXX.

¹⁶⁰ Some scholars read this as: “within and without.”

¹⁶¹ The Hebrew is obscure. JB: “five sided door jambs.”

¹⁶² The intention of the Hebrew is unclear. LXX: “στοαι τετραπλως.”

¹⁶³ So: LXX. Hebrew: “curtains.”

¹⁶⁴ NEB: “each having two swivel pins.”

¹⁶⁵ LXX adds: “κυκλοθεν.”

¹⁶⁶ Cf. footnote 139.

¹⁶⁷ Bul was the eighth month of the Hebrew calendar: mid-October to mid-November.

¹⁶⁸ The temple was completed in the second month of the pre-exilic calendar, the eighth month of the post-exilic calendar. This was a bit late for the Feast of Ingathering. Some scholars insert verses 11 – 13 here considering it to be a suitable interpolation.

¹⁶⁹ The house was so called because of the many columns. It served as a large ceremonial hall.

¹⁷⁰ So: LXX. “και ωμιαι.” Hebrew: “four.”

on the columns. ³ It was covered with cedar on the walls and ceiling between the beams that were on the columns. The columns numbered forty-five (fifteen to a row). ¹⁷¹ ⁴ There were three tiers of windows (with frames) opposite each other. ⁵ All doorways and windows had square frames ¹⁷² and these were opposite in three tiers. ¹⁷³

⁶ Solomon built the Hall of Columns ¹⁷⁴ which was fifty cubits (*or, seventy five feet*) long, and thirty cubits (*or, forty five feet*) wide. There also was an overhanging roof in front of the columns. ¹⁷⁵

⁷ He built the Hall of the Throne (*or, the Hall of Judgment*) where he pronounced judgment. This was paneled with cedar from floor to ceiling. ¹⁷⁶

⁸ His own residence in which he would reside was in another courtyard ¹⁷⁷ behind the Halls, having the same workmanship. (Solomon also made a house like the one in which he lived for Pharaoh's daughter whom he had married.)

⁹ All these buildings were made of costly stones, cut according to measure and smoothed on both inside and outside. ¹⁷⁸ From the foundation to the coping the stones were smooth. This was also the case from the outer court of the Lord to the great court ¹⁰ The costly stones in the foundation were huge, between eight and ten cubits (*or, twelve to fifteen feet*) in length. ¹¹ Above the foundation there were also costly stones, hewn according to measure as well as cedar beams. ¹⁷⁹ ¹² The great court had three courses of stone and one course of cedar beams all around the building. The same as was done on the inner court of the house of the Lord and the portico of that building.

4. The Tyrian Craftsman 7:13 – 14

¹³ King Solomon invited Hiram (*or, Hiram*), ¹⁸⁰ bringing him from Tyre. ¹⁴ He was the son of a Tyrian widow who was of the tribe of Naphtali. His father was a man from Tyre who was a bronze craftsman (*or, coppersmith*). Hiram had great wisdom and understanding, as a gifted craftsman in bronze, having skills to make anything that might be needed in bronze. He came to King Solomon and did all the art work for the king.

5. The Two Bronze Pillars 7:15 – 22

¹⁵ He cast ¹⁸¹ two pillars of bronze, one of which was eighteen cubits (*or, twenty-seven feet*) high and its circumference was twelve cubits (*or, eighteen feet*); ¹⁸² The pillar was hollow, its thickness ¹⁸³ was that of four fingers. The second pillar was identical.

¹⁷¹ NAB: "Moreover it had a ceiling of cedar above the beams resting on the columns." LXX adds:

"και απιθμος των στυλων."

¹⁷² Some LXX Mss. Have: "και αι χωραι."

¹⁷³ Some LXX Mss. have: "και αρο του θυρωματος."

¹⁷⁴ CB: "the pillared porch."

¹⁷⁵ Hebrew uncertain. LXX: "τπος αιλαμμιν."

¹⁷⁶ So: LXX & Syriac. Hebrew: "floor to floor."

¹⁷⁷ TAN: "in the rear courtyard, back of the palace."

¹⁷⁸ Literally: "sawed with a saw in the inside and the outside." TAN: "smooth on all sides."

¹⁷⁹ Cf.: ANET 375c.

¹⁸⁰ This is not the king of Tyre. The Hebrew name is vocalized in two ways and can be transliterated as "Hiram" or "Hiram." Translators vary as to spelling. His name probably was "Hiram-'abbi" meaning "Hiram is my father."

¹⁸¹ LXX: "και εχχωπμενων."

¹⁸² In other countries there were such free standing pillars before their temples. There the pillars were representations of the male and female deities. In that day this was a common practice at the entrance of temples in the Middle-East.

¹⁸³ LXX adds: "and the flutings."

16 He also made two capitals of molten bronze ¹⁸⁴ to be placed on the tops of the pillars. The height of each capital was five cubits (*or, seven and one half feet*). 17 Then he made two ¹⁸⁵ mesh filigreed, having the appearance of nets which hung from the capitals and chain work that adorned the capitals. 18 Additionally he made pomegranates ¹⁸⁶ which were placed so that they appeared to surround the network, covering the capitals at the top of both pillars. 19 The tops of the pillars themselves were shaped like lily petals, these being four cubits (*or, six feet*) in length. 20 The capitals were placed on the top of the pillars, fitting into a projection, all of which was covered by the filigree work that looked like net. Two hundred pomegranates were attached in two rows around each of the pillars. ¹⁸⁷ 21 These pillars were set up at the porch of the temple: the one on the south being named ‘Jachin,’ ¹⁸⁸ and the pillar placed at the north was called ‘Boaz.’ ¹⁸⁹ 22 The tops of the pillars had a lily work design. The work of the pillars was finished.

6. The Bronze Sea 7:23 – 26

23 Hiram then made a molten sea ¹⁹⁰ which was round: ten cubits (*or, fifteen feet*) from brim to brim and five cubits (*or, seven and one-half feet*) high. It was thirty cubits (*or, forty five feet*) in circumference. ¹⁹¹ 24 Just below the brim two rows of decorative bronze gourds surrounded the sea, having been cast at the same time as the casting of the sea. ¹⁹² 25 It stood on twelve oxen, three facing the north, three facing the west, three facing the south and three facing the east. The sea was set on them, their hindquarters being toward the inside. 26 It’s thickness was the width of a hand and its rim like that of a cup --- like the flower petals of a lily. It’s capacity was one thousand baths (*or, six thousand gallons*).

7. The Ten Bronze Lavers on Wheels 1:27 – 39

27 He also made ten bronze stands ¹⁹³ each of which was four cubits (*or, six feet*) long, four cubits (*or, six feet*) wide and three cubits (*or, four and one-half feet*) high. 28 The construction of the stands was as follows: inserted within the frames of the stands were panels 29 on which were depicted oxen and cherubim. ¹⁹⁴ On the upper and lower parts of the frames there were depictions of lions, and oxen. ¹⁹⁵ Wreaths were also incised into the metal. 30 Each stand had four bronze wheels with bronze axles and at the four corners were supports for a laver. These supports were cast with decorative wreaths. ¹⁹⁶ 31 The opening was at the top projecting upward one cubit (*or, one and one-half feet*). It was square, not round. 32 The four wheels were underneath the panels and the axles were cast together with the frame (in one piece), the wheels being a cubit and a half (*or, two*

¹⁸⁴ LXX: “τω αιλαρ του οικου.”

¹⁸⁵ So: LXX. Hebrew: “which he made two.”

¹⁸⁶ So: LXX and two Hebrew Mss. Other Hebrew Mss. have “patterns.”

¹⁸⁷ Hebrew uncertain.

¹⁸⁸ The name, in Hebrew, sounds like “God establishes.” Literally: “shall stand.”

¹⁸⁹ The name, in Hebrew, sounds like “God’s strength.” The LXX regards these as proper names but II Chronicles 3:17 translates the names as “setting right” and “strength.”

¹⁹⁰ TAN: “tank.” Literally: “sea.”

¹⁹¹ LXX: “και συνηγμενει.”

¹⁹² LXX: “and the stays under the rim were all around the rim and like the rim of a cup of a lily flower. The thickness was a span.”

¹⁹³ NEB: “trolleys.”

¹⁹⁴ CEV: “winged creatures.”

¹⁹⁵ LXX adds: “cherubs.”

¹⁹⁶ The Hebrew is uncertain.

and one fourth feet) in diameter. ³³ The wheels were made like chariot wheels, with spokes and hubs that were cast. ¹⁹⁷ ³⁴ There were four supports ¹⁹⁸ at the corners of the stands which had been cast as a part of the original casting of the stands. ³⁵ At the top of the stands there was a round elevated opening which was a half cubit (*or, nine inches*) high which was strengthened by supports and border frames. ³⁶ On the surface and panels cherubim were incised along with lions, palm trees and wreaths, determined by the available space. ¹⁹⁹ ³⁷ All ten stands were cast exactly alike. ²⁰⁰

³⁸ He made ten bronze pots each of which held forty baths (*or, 240 gallons*). Each pot measured four cubits (*or, six feet*) and one was positioned in each of the ten stands. ³⁹ He placed the stands – five on each side of the building ²⁰¹ (five being on the north side and five being on the south side) and he placed the sea in the south-east corner of the building.

8. The Bronze Objects 7:40 – 47

⁴⁰ Hiram also made the pots, shovels and basins ²⁰² finishing all the work that had been requested by King Solomon for use in the house of the Lord. ⁴¹ The items he made were: the two pillars, the two capitals for the pillars, the filigreed network that covered the capitals, the decorative items that adorned the capitals of the pillars, ⁴² including four hundred pomegranates which were placed in two rows on the network that covered the capitals of the pillars; ⁴³ the ten stands and the ten lavers which were placed on the stands, ⁴⁴ the sea and the twelve oxen that supported the sea.

⁴⁵ Pails, shovels and basins and all the other utensils of the house of the Lord which Hiram made at the request of King Solomon were all made of burnished bronze. ²⁰³ ⁴⁶ The casting was done on the plain of the Jordan in earthen, clay molds ²⁰⁴ in the area between Succoth ²⁰⁵ and Zarethan. ²⁰⁶ ⁴⁷ Solomon left all the items un-weighed because there were so many and the weight of the bronze was difficult to determine.

9. The Golden Objects 7:48 – 51

⁴⁸ Solomon placed ²⁰⁷ all the utensils that had been [*in the Tabernacle*] into the house of the Lord: the golden altar, the table for the bread of the Presence, ²⁰⁸ ⁴⁹ the lamp-stands of pure gold (five on the south and five on the north sides near the inner sanctuary), the flowers, the lamps, the tongs, --- all of them made of gold; ⁵⁰ and the basins, candle snuffers, sprinkling bowls, incense dishes, and fire-pans. These were all made of pure gold as were the sockets for the door to the innermost holy part of the house of the Lord as well as the sockets for all the other doors within the house of the Lord.

¹⁹⁷ LXX: “και η παργματατα αυτων.”

¹⁹⁸ CB: “shoulder pieces.”

¹⁹⁹ The Hebrew of verses 35 – 36 is very unclear.

²⁰⁰ NRSV: “He made ten stands like this: all of them had one casting, one measurement and one form.”

²⁰¹ Literally: “house.”

²⁰² TAN: “lavers, scrapers and sprinkling bowls.” NEB: “tossing bowls.”

²⁰³ The LXX adds a reference to forty eight pillars.

²⁰⁴ Literally: “in the thick of the earth.”

²⁰⁵ Succoth was located in the Jordan River valley. The present day name is “Tell Deir’alla” 2 miles north of the Jabbok River.

²⁰⁶ Zarethan, also known as Zarthan was located near Succoth on the east side of the Jordan River. The town of Adam lay between the two cities, Zarethan and Succoth.

²⁰⁷ The LXX in some Mss. has “και ελαρεν.” Other Mss. have: “και εδωκεν.” Hebrew: “made.”

²⁰⁸ The Sacred Loaves of bread were offered to the Lord as a symbol of the Lord’s presence in the Temple. The bread was placed on a special table and replaced with fresh bread each week. Cf.: Leviticus 24:45 – 9.

⁵¹ Thus the work that King Solomon had set out to do was completed for the house of the Lord was finished. Solomon brought the things which David his father had dedicated, the silver and gold, and the utensils, storing them in the treasury of the house of the Lord.

<CHAPTER 8>

C. Dedication of the Temple 8:1 – 66

1. The Ark Comes Home at Last 8:1 – 13 ²⁰⁹

¹ Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and the heads of all the clans ²¹⁰ of the people of Israel before the king in Jerusalem to bring the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, (that is Zion). ² All the men of Israel assembled before King Solomon at the Feast of Booths, ²¹¹ which is the seventh month. ³ All the elders of Israel were present and the priests lifted up the Ark of the Covenant. ⁴ They carried the Ark of the Lord, the tent of meeting, and all the holy utensils that were in the tent. ²¹² The priests brought everything that had been in the tent, assisted by the Levites. ⁵ King Solomon, along with the entire congregation of Israel who had assembled in his presence were with him, preceding the priestly procession that carried the Ark. Sacrifices were made in such an abundance that they could not be counted or enumerated. ²¹³ ⁶ The priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord ²¹⁴ then placed it in the most holy place, locating it beneath the wings of the Cherubim. ⁷ The wings of the Cherubim were spread out in such a manner that they shielded the Ark and its poles from above. ⁸ The poles projected beyond the inner sanctuary, the ends being visible in the inner sanctuary but were not to be seen from the outside. (They still remain in that position.) ²¹⁵ ⁹ There was nothing in the Ark other than two stone tablets ²¹⁶ which Moses had placed there at Horeb ²¹⁷ when the Lord made a covenant with the people of Israel when they came from the land of Egypt.

¹⁰ When the priests came out of the sanctuary a cloud filled the house of the Lord. ¹¹ Because of the cloud the priests were unable to remain in the sanctuary, for this cloud was the sign of the presence of God. ²¹⁸ The Lord's presence filled the house of the Lord.

²⁰⁹ Verses 1 – 13 are in a much shorter recension in the LXX. Some scholars feel the additions in Hebrew are a gloss. LXX: "Then King Solomon assembled all the elders of Israel to Zion to bring up the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord from the city of David, which is Zion, in the month Ethanim (the month of ever flowing streams), the season when there is ample rain, it being the first month of the year."

²¹⁰ Literally: "father's houses."

²¹¹ Cf.: Leviticus 23:34. NEB: "pilgrim feast." Literally: "the feast of the month Ethanim." It was better known as the "Feast of Booths" or "the Feast of Ingathering." It was celebrated on the first night of full moon in the month.

²¹² LXX: "The priests carried up the Ark, the tent of meeting and all the utensils that were in the tent of meeting."

²¹³ Literally: "sheep numbered for multitudes." LXX: "ἀναριθμυτα." Some scholars assume that these sacrifices were made along the way while the Ark was being carried.

²¹⁴ LXX: "την κιβωτον."

²¹⁵ A tradition says that King Solomon gave the Ark of the Covenant to the Queen of Sheba and that it is located in a monastery in Ethiopia. The site is carefully guarded and only one monk is permitted to be in its presence. Relatively few people are even permitted to go close to the monastery.

²¹⁶ LXX: "πλακες της διαθηκης."

²¹⁷ Another name for Sinai.

²¹⁸ The cloud is also called "the Shekinah."

12 Then Solomon said: “The Lord has set the sun in the heavens,
but has said he would dwell in a cloud of darkness.
13 I have built this exalted house
as a place for the Lord to dwell forever.”²¹⁹

2. *Solomon’s speech to the People 8:14 – 21*

14 Then the king faced²²⁰ the entire assembly and blessed all the people who were standing there. 15 He said, “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who has fulfilled with deeds what he had promised in words to my father David, saying; ‘Since the day I brought my people out of Egypt I did not choose a city among the tribes of Israel²²¹ in which my house should be built so that my name might be there. Rather than that I chose David as a representative of my people Israel.’

17 “Now it was the intention of my father David to build a house in the name of the Lord, the God of Israel. 18 The Lord told my father David: ‘Realizing that it was your intention to build a house in my name, you did well to have this intention. 19 Nonetheless, you will not build the house, but it will be a descendant of yours²²² who will build the house in my name.’ 20 The Lord has fulfilled the promise he had made, for I have ascended to the throne²²³ of Israel which was my father David’s as the Lord had promised and I have built this house in the name of the Lord, the God of Israel. 21 I have provided a place there for the ark which has within it the covenant of the Lord which he had made with our ancestors when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.”

3. *Solomon’s Prayer 8:22 – 53*

22 Solomon then stood before the altar of the Lord, in the presence of all those who had assembled from the people of Israel, and spreading out his hands²²⁴ 23 said, “O Lord God of Israel, in heaven above and on the earth beneath, there is none who is a god comparable to you who keeps covenants and shows steadfast love to those who are your followers who live their lives in total devotion to you. 24 You have kept your word which you declared to your servant David, my father, by not merely promising but fulfilling your word today. 25 Now therefore, O Lord God of Israel, keep the promise you gave to my father David when you said, ‘I will never fail to provide a man to be seated on the throne of Israel, provided that your descendants follow my will in their way of life and live as you lived before me.’ 26 Therefore, O God of Israel, let your word which you spoke to my father David be fulfilled.

27 ”Will God really reside on the earth?²²⁵ After all, heaven, even the highest heaven is unable to contain you! How much less can this house which I have built do so.²²⁶ 28 Yet, you have been attentive to the prayer of your servant and to his pleas. O Lord my God, listen to the prayers which your servant makes as he prays to you on this day! 29

²¹⁹ These words attributed to Solomon are not found in Hebrew. The LXX has the words with and addition: “This was from the Book of Jashar.” Some scholars feel it is an early saying that was brought from Egypt to Israel. CB: “Is this not written in the Book of Jashar?”

²²⁰ Literally: “turned his face about.”

²²¹ LXX: “εν ενι σκηπτρω.: One ms. adds: “σκηνην.”

²²² Literally: “is to come forth from your loins.”

²²³ Literally: “risen in place of.”

²²⁴ Literally: “palms.” It was the custom in Israel to hold up one’s hands toward heaven when praying, as a symbol of anticipation of fulfillment of one’s prayer.

²²⁵ The LXX adds: “μετα ανθρωπων.” This is also found in II Chronicles 6:18.

²²⁶ Cf.: ANET 387 a, b.

May your eyes be open toward this house night and day for it is the place about which you have said, 'My name will be there.' May you hear the prayer which this servant offers to you in this place. ³⁰ Listen to the supplications of your servant and your people Israel when they pray in this place! Even though heaven is your dwelling place, --- when you hear --- forgive (*or, pardon*).

³¹ "If a person sins against his neighbor and it is necessary that he take an oath, and comes and swears his oath before the altar in this house, ³² be sure to hear in heaven and judge your servants, ²²⁷ condemning those who are guilty by bringing an appropriate punishment on his own head. Vindicate the righteous and reward them appropriately.

³³ "When your people Israel are routed by an enemy, even if this happens because they sinned against you, turning their back on you, but then acknowledge your name and pray, making supplication to you in this house, ³⁴ then hear them in heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel, returning them again to this land which you gave to their ancestors. ²²⁸

³⁵ "When the heavens are shut off and there is no rain because of sins against you, if people pray toward this place, acknowledging your name and turn from their sins when you do not afflict them, ²²⁹ ³⁶ hear them in heaven and forgive the sins of your servants, your people Israel, as you teach them the good way by which they should live, and grant rain on the land which you have given to the people as their habitation.

³⁷ "If there is a famine or disease in the land; blight or mildew; locusts or caterpillars; ²³⁰ or the enemy besieges any of their settlements: ²³¹ whatever plague; whatever illness; ³⁸ whatever prayer, whatever supplication is made by any individual or group of the people of Israel, each being aware of his personal affliction ²³² which weighs heavily on his heart, stretching out his hands toward this house, ³⁹ then hear in your abode in heaven and pardon, acting in accord with your knowledge of the intentions of everyone, (You are the only one with such knowledge.) ⁴⁰ Then they will reverence you all the days of their lives in this land which you gave to their ancestors.

⁴¹ "Likewise, when a foreigner comes, not being one of the people of Israel but one who is from a distant country, coming because of knowledge of your name, ⁴² (for foreigners will also learn of your great name and your mighty hand) ²³³ and when a foreigner comes and prays toward this house, ⁴³ hear his prayer in your heavenly abode and do accordingly, granting all that is asked of you in order that all the nations of the earth may know your name and reverence you as do the people of Israel, that they may know that this house which I have built is called by your name.

⁴⁴ "If your people engage in battle against their enemy by whatever manner you might send them, and they pray to the Lord ²³⁴ toward the city which you have chosen,

²²⁷ LXX: "the people of Israel."

²²⁸ Some scholars feel that verses. 33 – 34 are a later interpolation based on the return of the captives from the Babylonian Exile.

²²⁹ So: LXX. Hebrew: "when you pressure them."

²³⁰ NEB: "black blight or red, locusts new-sloughed or fully grown."

²³¹ So: LXX & Syriac. Hebrew: "the land gates."

²³² Literally: "plague."

²³³ Hand is used to denote authority, power, control which also provides the power to flee from their home land.

²³⁴ LXX: "ἐν ὀνοματῶν."

and the house which I have built in your name, ⁴⁵ hear their prayers and supplications in heaven and maintain their cause. ²³⁵

⁴⁶ “If they sin against you (for there is no person who does not sin) and you are angry with them and give them over into the hands of an enemy so that they are taken away as captives, going to the land of their enemy, whether distant or near at hand, ⁴⁷ yet if it is within their heart that they return to their native land, and pray even though they are captives and repent, making supplication to you, even though this is being done in the land of their captivity ²³⁶ and they say, ‘We have sinned, and our actions have been perverse and wicked’, ⁴⁸ if they repent ²³⁷ with all their heart in the land of their enemies, who took them away as captives, and they pray to you toward this land which you gave to our ancestors, and toward the city you have chosen, and the house which I have built for your name, ⁴⁹ then listen to their prayers and supplications from your heavenly abode, and maintain their cause. ⁵⁰ and forgive your people ²³⁸ who have sinned against you, and all their transgressions ²³⁹ which they have committed against you and grant them compassion in the sight of those who carried them into captivity that they also might have compassion on them, ⁵¹ (for they are your people and your heritage which you led out of Egypt, out of the midst of the smelting furnace). ⁵² May your eyes be open to the supplication of your servant as well as the supplication of the people of Israel, being attentive to them when they call upon you. ⁵³ It is you who set them apart from all the nations of the earth to become your heritage as you declared through your servant Moses when you brought our ancestors out of Egypt, O Lord our God!”

4. Solomon’s Blessing 8:54 – 61

⁵⁴ When Solomon finished offering his prayer and supplication to the Lord he rose from the front of the altar where he had been kneeling ²⁴⁰ with his hands outstretched toward heaven, ⁵⁵ and standing he spoke with a loud voice, blessing the entire assembly of Israel, saying: ⁵⁶ “Praised be the Lord who has granted rest for his people Israel, in accord with all his promises for not one word has failed among all his good promises which he spoke through Moses his spokesperson. ⁵⁷ The Lord our God is with us, just as he was with our ancestors! He will never forsake us! ⁵⁸ We must incline our hearts to him, to follow his direction, keeping his commandments, his laws, and his rules just as he had enjoined these on our ancestors. ⁵⁹ Let these words of mine through which I have made supplication to the Lord be near to the Lord our God day and night and may he continually be concerned about the judgment of his servant and the cause of his people Israel as is needed daily, ²⁴¹ ⁶⁰ that all the nations of the earth will know that the Lord is God! There is no other! ⁶¹ Therefore let your heart be totally true to the Lord our God, obeying his statutes, keeping his laws as certainly as you are keeping them today!”

²³⁵ Literally: “right” or “justice.”

²³⁶ LXX: “μετηγαγεσ.”

²³⁷ Literally: “with all their heart and with all their soul.”

²³⁸ LXX: “ταις αδικιαις αυτων.”

²³⁹ The Hebrew word that is used is often translated as “rebellion.”

²⁴⁰ Interestingly he was standing at the beginning of his prayer. At the end of the prayer he has been kneeling.

²⁴¹ Literally: “the thing of a day in a day.”

5. *The Sacrifices and the Feast* 8:62 – 66

⁶² It was then that King Solomon and all Israel uniting with him, offered sacrifices before the Lord. ⁶³ Solomon offered as a peace offering ²⁴² twenty-two thousand oxen and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep. ²⁴³ The king and all the assembled people of Israel dedicated the house of the Lord. ⁶⁴ On that same day the king consecrated the middle of the court-yard that was in front of the house of the Lord. There he offered burnt offerings and cereal (*or, meal*) offerings along with fat pieces from the peace offerings because the bronze altar ²⁴⁴ that was before the Lord was too small for all the burnt offerings, the cereal (*or, meal*) offerings and the fat pieces from the peace offerings.

⁶⁵ It was in this manner that Solomon held the feast along with the great assembly of Israel which had gathered before the Lord God, coming from the entrance of Hamath (*or, Lebo-Hamath*) ²⁴⁵ to the Brook of Egypt ²⁴⁶ (*or, coming from one end of the country to the other*). The feast lasted seven days. ²⁴⁷ ⁶⁶ On the eighth day he sent the people away and they blessed the king ²⁴⁸ and went to their homes, filled with joy and gladness of heart because of all the goodness the Lord had bestowed on his servant David and on his people, Israel.

<CHAPTER 9>

D. Solomon's Apogee and Decline 9:1 – 11:43

1. Solomon's Second Vision 9:1 – 9

¹ When Solomon had finished constructing the house of the Lord and the Royal Palace along with everything else Solomon desired to construct, ²⁴⁹ ² the Lord appeared to Solomon a second time, much like his first appearance at Gibeon. ²⁵⁰ ³ The Lord spoke to him saying, "I have heard your prayer and your supplication which you made in my presence. I have consecrated the house which you built, and put my name on it forever, my eyes and heart will be there for all time. ⁴ As for you --- you will walk before me as David your father walked --- wholeheartedly and with uprightness, seeking to do all ²⁵¹ that I have commanded, and keeping my laws and my rules. ⁵ Your royal throne will be securely established within Israel as I had previously established ²⁵² with your father David, saying: 'Your royal throne will be within your family, Israel, and it will not end.' ⁶ However, if you and your descendants withdraw from following me and do not keep my laws and my rules which I have placed before you, but choose to serve other gods and

²⁴² TAN: "sacrifice of well-being." NEB: "shared offering." NIV: "fellowship offering." So also in verse 64.

²⁴³ Some Mss. have twenty-two thousand sheep." This is omitted by the LXX.

²⁴⁴ This is the first reference to the bronze altar.

²⁴⁵ This was the pass between the Hermon and Lebanon Mountains. Scholars question whether "Lebo" is a proper name or should be translated as "the entrance to."

²⁴⁶ The Brook of Egypt marked the south-western border of Canaan and later of Israel. It is identified with Wadi el 'Arish. Its origin is in the middle of the Sinai Peninsula and it flows into the Mediterranean Sea.

²⁴⁷ Literally: "seven days and seven days, fourteen days." The LXX has "seven days." The error may have come from the enthusiasm of a scribe.

²⁴⁸ TAN: "bade the king good-by."

²⁴⁹ Literally: "Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do."

²⁵⁰ The Lord's appearing to Solomon was a confirmation of the first appearance at Gibeon, and the assurance that Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple had been heard..

²⁵¹ LXX: "ηγουμενος."

²⁵² Literally: "spoke."

worship them, ⁷ I will renounce you and you will be removed from the land which I have granted you. Then the house which I have consecrated for my name will be abandoned by me and I will not look at it. Then Israel will become a proverb and a byword ²⁵³ among all nations. ⁸ Their house will become a pile of ruins ²⁵⁴ so that everyone who passes by will be filled with astonishment and will hiss ²⁵⁵ and will say, ‘Why has the Lord done this to this land and to this house?’ ⁹ Then they will say: ‘Because they abandoned the Lord their God who brought their ancestors out of the land of Egypt., and affiliated themselves with other gods, worshiping them and serving them. Therefore the Lord has brought all this evil on them.’”

2. *Further Details of Solomon’s Magnificence and Wisdom 9:10 -10:29* ²⁵⁶

a. *Sale of Galilean Territory 9:10 – 14*

¹⁰ After twenty years during which Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the Lord and the royal palace, ¹¹ Hiram the king of Tyre had provided Solomon with supplies of cedar and cypress timber as well as gold which was greatly desired by King Solomon. Solomon in turn gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. ¹² When Hiram came from Tyre ²⁵⁷ to see the cities given him by Solomon they did not please him. ²⁵⁸ ¹³ He therefore said, “My brother: what kind of cities are these which you have given me?” This resulted in the area being called ‘the land of Cabul’ ²⁵⁹ even today. ¹⁴ Hiram had sent King Solomon one hundred twenty talents of gold. ²⁶⁰

b. *Forced Labor Levy 9:15 – 23*

¹⁵ This is the account of the forced labor ²⁶¹ which King Solomon levied to build the house of the Lord and his own house, the Milo, ²⁶² the walls of Jerusalem, Hazor, Meggido and Gezer. ¹⁶ (Pharaoh, king of Egypt had captured Gezer and destroyed it with fire, massacred all the Canaanites who had lived there and then gave the city as a part of the wedding dowry when his daughter became Solomon’s wife. ¹⁷ Solomon rebuilt Gezer), Bethoron, ¹⁷ Baalath and Tamar ²⁶³ in the wilderness of the land of Judah. ²⁶⁴ ¹⁹ All the cities with stone walls that were Solomon’s were cities for his chariots and for his horsemen and whatever Solomon had the desire ²⁶⁵ to build, be it in Jerusalem or

²⁵³ LXX: “εις αρανιαμον.”

²⁵⁴ So: Old Latin. Hebrew: “high.” II Chronicles 7:2 has “house which is high.” The Targum and several other ancient texts have: “their house will become a ruin.”

²⁵⁵ Literally: “will be dismissed from my presence.” The action of hissing is to ward off a like fate for the observer. Cf.: Jeremiah 18:16.

²⁵⁶ The order in the LXX differs from the Hebrew order, but it is not an improvement. Some scholars feel the LXX follows the original text better than the Hebrew.

²⁵⁷ The LXX adds: “και επορευθη εις την Γαλιλιαν.”

²⁵⁸ Literally: “they were not right in my sight.”

²⁵⁹ Cabul presumably means “like nothing.” Josephus in *Antiquities* V111, 5, 3 uses the word and it seems to mean “displeasure.” TAN in a footnote: “as nothing.”

²⁶⁰ The cities were a gift to King Hiram but he seems to have paid excessively for the ‘gift cities’. A talent weighed 91 pounds (troy).

²⁶¹ MFT: “labor gangs.”

²⁶² The Milo was the building of a fortification in the area of the Old Jebusite City. The word is possibly of Canaanite origin and if so means “filled up.” Presumably some areas needed to be built up to complete the walled fortification. Some scholars translate this as “the citadel.”

²⁶³ The Hebrew was written as Tamar (as the Ketiv) but was never pronounced that way. It was always pronounced as “Tadmor,” (as the Qere.)

²⁶⁴ Hebrew omits “Judah.”

²⁶⁵ Literally: “the desire of Solomon where he desired to build Jerusalem.”

Lebanon or any where else in his land, it was accomplished. ²⁰ All those people who remained in the land who were Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, ²⁶⁶ Hivites, and Jebusites ²⁶⁷ who were not citizens of Israel --- ²¹ who were descendants of those who were left behind in the land, those who the people of Israel had been unable to exterminate ²⁶⁸ [*or, assimilate*] --- these Solomon conscripted as slave laborers and so they remain. ²² The people of Israel however were not enslaved. They were the warriors, attendants, commanders, captains, cavalry officers and members of the cavalry.

²³ These were the chief officers ²⁶⁹ who were over Solomon's work: five hundred and fifty who had charge of the people who did the work.

c. Pharaoh's Daughter Takes Up Her Residence 9:24

²⁴ Pharaoh's daughter went up from the city of David to her own house which had been built for her by Solomon. Then he built the Milo. ²⁷⁰

d. Solomon's Sacrifices 9:25

²⁵ Three times each year ²⁷¹ Solomon offered up burnt offerings on the altar which he had made for the Lord, burning incense before the Lord. Thus he fulfilled his temple obligations. ²⁷²

e. Solomon's Overseas Trade 9:26 – 28

²⁶ King Solomon built a navy at Ezion-geber which was near Elath on the shore of the Red Sea, ²⁷³ in the land of Edom. ²⁷ Hiram sent his servants with their fleet: expert seamen who were familiar with the sea. These worked together with the servants of Solomon. ²⁸ They sailed to Ophir ²⁷⁴ and brought gold from there to King Solomon in the amount of four hundred and twenty talents.

<CHAPTER 10>

f. The Visit of the Queen of Sheba 10:1 – 13 ²⁷⁵

¹ When the Queen of Sheba heard of the fame ²⁷⁶ of Solomon because of the house of the Lord she traveled [*to Jerusalem*] to test Solomon with hard questions (*or, riddles*). ²⁷⁷ ² She came to Jerusalem with a very large retinue, with camels bearing spices, a great amount of gold, and precious gems. When she arrived in Solomon's

²⁶⁶ The LXX adds: "και του Χαναναιου."

²⁶⁷ The LXX adds: "και του Γορνεσαιου."

²⁶⁸ Literally: "put on the ban." NAB: "whose doom the Israelites had been unable to accomplish."

²⁶⁹ LXX: "οι αρχουτες οι καθεσταμενοι."

²⁷⁰ This verse is inserted in a different point in the chapter by the LXX.

²⁷¹ Perhaps these were the three harvest festivals: 1. Unleavened Bread (barley harvest). 2. Feast of Weeks (wheat harvest) 3. Feast of Ingathering (wine and autumn fruits).

²⁷² The Hebrew is uncertain. Some scholars translate this as: "He kept the temple in repair."

²⁷³ LXX: "της εσχατης."

²⁷⁴ In those days Ophir was considered the same as a modern "El Dorado." Ophir was perhaps one of three different possible places: 1. Southeast Arabia. 2. Ethiopia. 3. Mushonaland (between Zimbabwe and Zambizi.)

²⁷⁵ Cf.: ANET p. 283b. Some scholars revise the order of the text. 11, 12, 14 – 26, 28 – 29, 27, 1 – 10, 13

²⁷⁶ LXX: "name."

²⁷⁷ TAN: "The queen of Sheba heard of Solomon's fame through the name of the Lord, and she came to him with hard questions." There are several possible translations: "Solomon's fame concerning the name of the Lord." Or: "heard the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord." The word translated as "hard questions" implies "riddles." LXX: "try him with riddles." Josephus: *Antiquities* VIII, 3. 3. reports that Solomon and Hiram indulged in such contests of wits.

presence she told him everything that was on her mind. ³ Solomon answered ²⁷⁸ all her questions. There was nothing that prevented the king from being able to explain his answers to her. ²⁷⁹ ⁴ When the queen of Sheba observed Solomon's wisdom, his house that he had built, ⁵ the food on his table, ²⁸⁰ the seating of his courtiers, the attentiveness of his servants, their clothing (*or, uniforms*), his wine stewards, ²⁸¹ the burnt offerings which he offered in the house of the Lord, she was left breathless. ²⁸²

⁶ She said to the king: "The report I had heard in my country about you and your wisdom ⁷ was not convincing to me that what was reported was true until I came to see for myself and now that I have seen I can say that not even half was reported of your wisdom and wealth ²⁸³ which far surpasses what I had heard. ²⁸⁴ ⁸ How fortunate your wives ²⁸⁵ are! Your courtiers are fortunate to continually hear all your wisdom! ⁹ Blessed be the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! This proves ²⁸⁶ that the Lord loves Israel for ever: he has made you king, that you may carry out justice and righteousness." ¹⁰ She then gave the king a hundred twenty talents of gold, ²⁸⁷ and a huge quantity of spices, ²⁸⁸ and precious gems (*or, stones*). There was never such an abundance of spices again to compare with the spices given to Solomon by the queen of Sheba.

¹¹ (Moreover, Hiram's naval fleet brought gold from Ophir in great amounts and almug wood ²⁸⁹ and precious gems (*or, stones*). ¹² The king made buttresses ²⁹⁰ from the almug wood for the house of the Lord and for the royal palace. The remaining wood was used to make lyres and harps for the musicians. Never again was such an amount of almug wood seen to this day.) ²⁹¹

¹³ King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba everything she desired. Whatever she asked for was given to her from the bounty of King Solomon. She then returned to her own land with her retinue of servants.

g. Climax of Solomon's Splendor 10:14 - 29

¹⁴ The weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred sixty-six talents of gold. ²⁹² ¹⁵ Additional sources came from tax on traders and profit from merchants and from all the kings of Arabia and from the vassal princes who paid tribute

²⁷⁸ Literally: "told her all her words."

²⁷⁹ Literally: "there was nothing hindering answers to her which the king could not answer to her."

Cf.: II Chronicles 9:4

²⁸⁰ LXX: "Solomon's food."

²⁸¹ Literally: "cup bearers."

²⁸² Literally: "there was no more spirit in her." She could no longer compete with him in an interchange of wise sayings and riddles.

²⁸³ LXX: "αγαθα." "goodness" or "prosperity."

²⁸⁴ LXX adds: "in my land."

²⁸⁵ So: LXX & Syriac. Hebrew: "men."

²⁸⁶ Literally: "is."

²⁸⁷ See footnote 260.

²⁸⁸ LXX adds: "and other great gifts."

²⁸⁹ Scholars generally agree the wood is no doubt Sandalwood which has a bright red color. Josephus *Antiquities* VIII. 7, 1 confirms this as do other references where the word is used. NEV: "juniper wood."

²⁹⁰ The meaning of the Hebrew is in question. Supports, pilasters, railings, decorations are all used by translators.

²⁹¹ Some scholars insert verses 26 – 28 here. NASV: "such almug trees have not come in again, nor have they been seen to this day."

²⁹² See footnote 260.

to Solomon. ¹⁶ King Solomon made ²⁹³ two hundred large shields of beaten gold with six hundred shekels of gold in each shield. ²⁹⁴ ¹⁷ He also made three hundred small shields (*or bucklers*) of beaten gold, each having been made of three minas ²⁹⁵ of gold These were all hung in the House of the Forest of Lebanon. ¹⁸ The king also made a large ivory throne which was overlaid with the very best gold. ¹⁹ The throne had six steps and the back of the throne had a rounded top (*or a figure of a calf's head*) ²⁹⁶ and on each side there were armrests. A lion was standing beside each armrest. ²⁹⁷ ²⁰ Twelve lions stood, one on each end of the six steps. No other kingdom had a throne to match the throne of Solomon. ²¹ All of the drinking vessels of King Solomon were made of gold and all the vessels in the house of the Forest of Lebanon were of solid gold. None were made of silver for silver was not considered to be anything (*or, of little value*) in the days of Solomon. ²² The king had a fleet of large ships, (Tarshish class), which were in partnership with those of Hiram. The fleet returned from Tarshish ²⁹⁸ every third year bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks. ²⁹⁹

²³ King Solomon excelled over all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. ³⁰⁰ ²⁴ The entire earth came to pay homage to Solomon and to listen to the wisdom with which God had endowed him. ²⁵ Everyone brought presents: articles of silver and gold, garments, myrrh, ³⁰¹ spices, horses and mules in the amount that was due annually as tribute.

²⁶ Solomon amassed chariots and horsemen. He had one thousand four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses. The horses were stalled in Jerusalem and in other chariot towns. ³⁰² ²⁷ The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stone, and made cedar as plentiful as sycamore from the Shephelah. ³⁰³ ²⁸ Solomon was an importer of horses from Egypt (*or, Musrum*) ³⁰⁴ and Kue and the king's traders purchased them from Kue for a fixed price. ²⁹ A chariot could be imported from Egypt for six hundred shekels ³⁰⁵ of silver, and a horse for one hundred and fifty. The king's traders also sold horses, exporting them to the kings of the Hitites and the king of the Aramaeans.

²⁹³ LXX: "two hundred spears. Three hundred shekels of gold were on each spear."

²⁹⁴ These shields were oblong and would cover the entire body. These shields were similar to a Roman "scutum." A shekel of gold weighed .364 ounces (troy).

²⁹⁵ A mina of gold weighed 18.2 ounces (troy).

²⁹⁶ Some scholars feel the reference in Hebrew is to a rounded canopy above the throne. Linguistically this is questionable.

²⁹⁷ Literally: "on this side and on that at the place of the seat."

²⁹⁸ These ships would be considered as "ocean ships" not ships that plied the coastal waters. Scholars are uncertain as to the exact location of Tarshish. Traditionally it has been thought the reference is to Phoenician outposts in Spain.

²⁹⁹ Some scholars have revocalized the Hebrew word to read: "baboons."

³⁰⁰ The LXX inserts verses 5 – 22 here.

³⁰¹ The JB has "armor."

³⁰² Cf.: II Chronicles 1:14; 9:25.

³⁰³ The Shephelah was the land between the Judean hills and the coastal lowlands.

³⁰⁴ The Hebrew word for "Egypt" is "Mizraim." Possibly the word should be "Musrum" which was in a neighboring location to "Kue." These places were located in southeastern Turkey and were both important breeders of horses in the days of Solomon. Egypt certainly had horses, but scholars question whether they would have had a plentiful source of horses.

³⁰⁵ See footnote 294.

<CHAPTER 11>

3 *Solomon's Foreign Wives and His Idolatry 11:1 – 13* ³⁰⁶

1 King Solomon loved many women from other lands: the daughter of Pharaoh, Moabites, Ammorites, ³⁰⁷ Edomites, Sidoneons (*or, Phoenicians*), and Hitites. ³⁰⁸ 2 who were women from nations concerning which the Lord had warned the people of Israel, saying: “You are not to enter into marriage with them, neither will they, for they will surely sway you from your loyalty to the Lord and coax you to worship other gods.” Solomon however loved them dearly. ³⁰⁹ 3 Among these wives he had seven hundred who were of royal birth ³¹⁰ along with three hundred concubines (*or, secondary wives*) who coaxed Solomon away from the Lord. ³¹¹ 4 When Solomon grew old his wives swayed him so that he turned to other gods and he did not follow the Lord his God unreservedly as his father David had done. 5 Solomon started worshipping ³¹² Ashtoreth ³¹³ the goddess of Sidon (*or, Phoenician*) and worshiped Milcom ³¹⁴ the god of the Ammonites. 6 Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and did not follow the Lord unreservedly as David his father had done. ³¹⁵ 7 Then Solomon built a worship site for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and Molech the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mountain east of Jerusalem (*or, the Mount of Olives*). ³¹⁶ 8 Solomon did this for all his foreign wives who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods. ³¹⁷

9 The Lord was angry with Solomon because he was not unreservedly faithful to the Lord the God of Israel especially since the Lord had appeared to him twice ¹⁰ and had commanded him not to worship ³¹⁸ other gods but he should obey what God had commanded. ¹¹ Because of this the Lord spoke to Solomon saying: “Since this has been your intention and you have not kept my commandments and my laws which I had expected you to follow, I will definitely tear this kingdom from you and will give it to your servant. ¹² Yet: for the sake of your father I will I will not do this until you have turned this kingdom into the hands of your son. ³¹⁹ ¹³ However, I will not tear away the entire kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of your father David who was my faithful servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city I have chosen.”

³⁰⁶ Some scholars place v. 3 ahead of v. 1. In the LXX the order of the verses is quite different. Possibly they had a different recension as the basis for the translation into Greek.

³⁰⁷ LXX: “Ammorite women.”

³⁰⁸ The LXX adds: “Ἀμορραίας.”

³⁰⁹ LXX: “Solomon was a lover of women and married many foreign wives from the nations concerning which the Lord forbade the children of Israel.”

³¹⁰ Many marriages involved political situations based on the assumption that if the king was married to the daughter of another king they will deal properly and peacefully with one another.

³¹¹ Interestingly a commentator says, “There is no need to doubt the accuracy of the numbers.”

³¹² Literally: “went after.”

³¹³ The name, correctly, is “Astarte.” “Ishtar” would be the Mesopotamian equivalent. In Syria the same god was known as “Ba'al” The spelling was deliberately altered by the Masoretes when the vowel points were inserted in the Hebrew Scriptures. The vowels are those what would be used in the Hebrew word for “shame.”

³¹⁴ The spelling of the god Milcom has also been revised by the Masoretes.

³¹⁵ There is a difference between intelligence and devotion.

³¹⁶ LXX adds: “the idol of the children of Ammon.”

³¹⁷ To have shrines for the gods of the neighboring countries would also ease the concern for travelers since worship could now be conducted in the land of Israel – even in Judah and Jerusalem.

³¹⁸ Literally: “go after.”

³¹⁹ So: LXX.

4. Two Revolts 11:14 – 25

a. The Revolt of Hadad 11:14 – 22

¹⁴ The Lord caused Hadad the Edomite ³²⁰ to become an adversary of Solomon. (He was of the royal house ³²¹ of Edom.) ¹⁵ [When David was in Edom, *having overpowered the army of Edom*] Joab the commander of the army went up to bury the dead [*from the army of Israel*] and he also slaughtered the entire male population of the country. ¹⁶ (Joab and the entire army of Israel remained in Elam for six months, until it was certain that he had exterminated the entire male population of Elam.) ¹⁷ Hadad however fled with some Elamites who had been his father's servants. (Hadad was a mere child at that time.) ¹⁸ They set out from Midian and came to Paran ³²² where a number of men joined them as they went on to Egypt, to Pharaoh the king of Egypt who gave them housing, designated that they receive an allowance and they received a grant of land which was to be theirs. ¹⁹ Hadad received special favor from Pharaoh who gave Hadad the sister of his wife, Queen Tahpenes, to be the wife of Hadad.³²³ ²⁰ The sister of Tahpenes bore him a son who was named Genobath whom Tahpenes weaned in the palace of Pharaoh. Genobath was raised in Pharaoh's house with Pharaoh's own sons.] ³²⁴ ²¹ When Hadad learned that David had died ³²⁵ and that Joab who had been the commander of the army of Israel had also died he spoke to Pharaoh, saying, "Let me leave to go back to my home country." ²² Pharaoh responded: "Have I failed to give you something you might need that you desire to go back to your home land now?" Hadad replied: "Just let me go home!" ³²⁶

b. The Revolt by Rizon 11:23 – 25

²³ God also raised up an enemy by the name of Rizon, the son of Eliada who had fled from his master, Hadadezer the king of Zobah. ³²⁷ ²⁴ He gathered men about him and he became the leader of a marauding army after the army of the kingdom had been slaughtered by David. He established a base in Damascus where he was declared to be the king. ²⁵ He was an adversary of Israel during the time of Solomon's reign doing the sort of mischief that Hadad did. He abhorred Israel and ruled over Syria.

c. Jeroboam's Early History 11:26 – 40

²⁶ Jeroboam the son of Nebat was an Ephraimite from Zeredah ³²⁸ who was a servant of Solomon. His mother's name was Zeruah, a widow. He rebelled against the king. ²⁷ This was the reason he rebelled against King: Solomon had built the Milo (*or,*

³²⁰ Edom was located south of Moab, south and east of the Dead Sea.

³²¹ Literally: "the king's seed."

³²² Midian was located in northwestern Arabia along the east shore of the Gulf of Aqabah. Paran was located in the general area of the Peninsula of Sinai.

³²³ That Hadad received the favor of Pharaoh was exactly what he needed. That same favor was an additional threat to Solomon.

³²⁴ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

³²⁵ Literally: "slept with his fathers."

³²⁶ The LXX adds: "so Hadad went home to his own country." Many scholars insert verse 25 here. Some versions add: "This is where the harm of Hadad comes from: he loathed Israel and ruled Edom."

³²⁷ Zoban is presumed to be an Aramaic town and kingdom to the north in the Biqu valley, located between Lebanon and Anti-lebanon. Scholars feel there is no exact location but know the general area. Apparently it was more closely related to Akkadian culture.

³²⁸ The exact location of Zeredah is uncertain. It is thought to be the present day spring 'Ain Seridah in the Wadi Deir Ballut in Western Samaria. Other scholars identify it with Deir Ghassaneh, ca. fifteen miles SW of Shechem.

the citadel) and restored the wall ³²⁹ of the city of his father David. ²⁸ Jeroboam was very capable and when Solomon saw this young man who was industrious ³³⁰ Solomon put him in charge of the conscripted laborers (*or, forced laborers*) of the house of Joseph. ²⁹ It was during that time that when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem he met the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite as he was going along the road. Ahijah had worn a new outer garment and when they met there was no one else around --- they were alone in the country. ³⁰ Ahijah took hold of his new outer garment that he was wearing and tore it into twelve pieces. ³¹ He said to Jeroboam: “Take, as your possession ten of these pieces for the Lord the God of Israel says: ‘I am about to tear the kingdom from the rule of Solomon and will give you ten tribes. ³² [He will have one tribe ³³¹ for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel because he has forsaken me and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonites, Chemosh the god of Moab, ³³² and Milcom the god ³³³ of the Ammonites, thereby not doing my will or being obedient to my way, failing to keep my laws and rules, unlike his father David. ³³⁴ ³⁴ Nevertheless I will not take away the entire kingdom for I will let him rule for the rest of his life ³³⁵ for the sake of my servant David who kept my commandments and my laws. ³⁵ I will take the kingdom out of his son’s hands and will give you ten tribes. ³⁶ His son will receive one tribe that my servant David always will have a lamp ³³⁶ before me in Jerusalem, the city where I have chosen to put my name. ³⁷ I will accept (*or, take*) you and you will reign over all that you desire for you will be the king of Israel. ³⁸ If you are attentive to all that I command of you and if your life is lived in accordance with my way and if you will do what is right in my sight, keeping my laws and commandments as David did I will be with you. I assure you that you will establish a house like that of David and I will give Israel to you. ³³⁷ ³⁹ I will afflict the descendants of David, but not forever.] ³³⁸ ⁴⁰ Solomon was anxious to kill Jeroboam but Jeroboam fled to Egypt, to Shishak the king of Egypt until Solomon’s death.

d. The Death of Solomon 11:41 – 43

⁴¹ Additional acts of Solomon and all that he did, his wisdom, all this is recorded in the book of the Acts of Solomon. ⁴² Solomon reigned in Jerusalem as king over the entire land for forty years. ⁴³ Solomon died (*or, slept with his fathers*) and was buried in the city of David his father and *Rehoboam* ³³⁹ his son succeeded him as king. ³⁴⁰

³²⁹ Literally: “the gaps in the wall.”

³³⁰ Literally: “a doer of work.” LXX: “a man of work.”

³³¹ LXX: “καὶ δύο σκηπτρα.” “two tribes.” The small tribe of Simeon had already been absorbed by Judah and Jerusalem.

³³² The LXX adds: “καὶ τοὺς εἰδωλῶν.” “and their idols.”

³³³ LXX: “the abomination of the children of Amon.”

³³⁴ Cf.: ANET 17c.

³³⁵ Literally: “for I will certainly resist him all the days of his life.”

³³⁶ Even in poor homes an oil light was kept burning at night. It was thought that if the light does not exist their faith also does not exist.

³³⁷ The last phrase of v. 38 and v. 39 are not in the LXX.

³³⁸ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

³³⁹ With the kingdom divided the names of the Northern kings will be in SMALL CAPS and the Southern kings will be in *italics*.

³⁴⁰ The three who rebelled against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite, Rezon of Syria and Jeroboam of Israel were a threefold threat against the kingdom ruled by Solomon.

<CHAPTER 12>

III The Two Kingdoms I Kings 12:1- II Kings 17:41

A. The Schism 12:1 – 14:31

1. JEROBOAM King of Israel 12:1 – 33

a. Revolt of the Ten Tribes 12:1 - 20

¹ *Rehoboam* went to Shechem ³⁴¹ since all of Israel had come there for his coronation. ² When JEROBOAM the son of Nebat heard of it (he was in Egypt having fled there because of his fear of Solomon) JEROBOAM returned from Egypt. ³⁴² ³ The people recalled him and all the people who gathered spoke to *Rehoboam* saying: ⁴ "Your father made our lives unbearable. ³⁴³ Lighten the unbearable demands of your father which are a heavy yoke on us and we will serve you." ⁵ His response was: "Depart for three days and then return again to me." The people disbanded.

⁶ King *Rehoboam* then met with those who had formerly been advisors (*or, the elders*) to his father Solomon saying, "How do you advise me to answer these people?" ⁷ They told him, "If you want to act as a servant of the people and serve them as king, speak kindly to them and they will be loyal to you." ³⁴⁴ ⁸ He rejected the counsel of the former advisors of his father and turned to the young men with whom he had grown up, whom he had selected to be his advisors. ⁹ He said to them: "What do you advise me that my answer should be? These people have said 'Ease up on the unbearable demands your father imposed on us.'" ¹⁰ The young men who had grown up with him told him: "This is what you ought to say to those who said, 'Your father made our lives unbearable. Will you lighten the load for us?' Say: 'My little finger ³⁴⁵ is thicker than my father's waist (*or, loins*). While my father laid unbearable demands on you, I will increase these demands! My father flogged you with whips. I will flog you with scourges.'" ³⁴⁶

¹² JEROBOAM ³⁴⁷ and all the people ³⁴⁸ came to *Rehoboam* on the third day as the king had said: "Come to me again on the third day." ¹³ The king spoke harshly to the people, disregarding the advice given by the advisors of his father. ¹⁴ He spoke to them as he had been recommended by his young advisors, saying: "My father imposed unbearable demands on you but I will increase these demands! My father flogged you with whips. I will flog you with scourges." ¹⁵ (The king did not listen to the people for

³⁴¹ There was a famous tree in Shechem that was greatly revered. The tradition of the time was that the tree, Oak of Moreh, was the place where Abraham had a vision of God and built an altar. Genesis 12:6. Shechem was the location of a covenant which was made between God and his people. Joshua 24:25ff.

³⁴² Verse 2 does not appear in the LXX. Later in this chapter the LXX has a long passage which speaks of Jeroboam in Egypt.

³⁴³ Literally: "made our yoke heavy." Other than in this passage the word "yoke" is only used to describe foreign nations. It is only here that it is used concerning the people of Israel.

³⁴⁴ JB: "act as a servant of the people now and honor them, treat them fairly and they will be your servants forever."

³⁴⁵ This is the wording of II Chronicles 10:10. The Hebrew here has "my littleness." The Vulgate & Syriac also have "my little finger."

³⁴⁶ Literally: "scorpions." The Targum explains this to be "scourges." This is perhaps an error in transmission since in Hebrew the words for "scorpions" and "scourges" are virtually the same. TEV: "bull whips." JB: "loaded scourges.:" NEB: "the lash."

³⁴⁷ The name is omitted in the LXX.

³⁴⁸ LXX: "Israel."

this was a situation brought on by the Lord that he might fulfill his word which he had spoken through Ahijah the Shilonite the son of Nebat.)³⁴⁹

16 When all Israel realized that the king would not listen to them the people answered the king:

“What part do we have in David?”³⁵⁰

We have no share in the son of Jesse.

To your tents, O Israel!

Take care of your own house, David.”³⁵¹

17 *Rehoboam* reigned over those people of Israel who lived in the cities of Judah.³⁵² 18 Then King *Rehoboam* sent Adoram³⁵³ who was the taskmaster over the conscripted workers and the people of Israel joined together and stoned him to death.³⁵⁴ King *Rehoboam* hurriedly entered his chariot and fled to Jerusalem. 20 Consequently Israel has been rebelling against the house of David every since (*or, to this day*). 20 When Israel heard that JEROBOAM³⁵⁵ had returned he was called to come to the assembly and he was made the king of Israel. None followed the house of David with the exception of Judah³⁵⁶

21 Upon reaching Jerusalem *Rehoboam* mustered an army from the entire house of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin. The army of selected warriors numbered one hundred eighty thousand warriors who were ready to fight the house of Israel³⁵⁷ to restore the kingdom to *Rehoboam* the son of Solomon. 22 The word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God: 23 “Tell *Rehoboam* the son of Solomon, the king of Judah along with the entire house of Judah and the house of Benjamin and all the additional people: 24 “Thus says the Lord: You will not engage in battle with your kinsmen, the people of Israel! Every man is to return to his own house for this is my word!” They listened to the word of the Lord and returned home according to the word of the Lord.³⁵⁸

c. JEROBOAM Consolidates His Kingdom 12:25 – 33

25 Then JEROBOAM fortified Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and lived there. He then went from there to fortify Penuel.³⁵⁹ 26 Then JEROBOAM said to himself, “Now this kingdom will be able to turn back the house of David! 27 However, if these people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the Lord in Jerusalem the loyalty³⁶⁰ of the

³⁴⁹ Rehoboam does not seem to grasp the significance of the situation.

³⁵⁰ TAN: “We have no part in David.” Already in David’s time the north felt neglected and to a degree felt abandoned.

³⁵¹ LXX: “All the Israelites knew that the king would not pay attention to them and what they were saying. What position do we have in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. O Israel, depart, go to your tents. Now feed your own house, you son of David. So Israel went to its tents.” “To go to one’s tents” meant to go home. The two groups have complete divergence.

³⁵² This verse is omitted in the LXX.

³⁵³ This is an alternative spelling of “Adoniram.”

³⁵⁴ Literally: “with stones till he died.”

³⁵⁵ The LXX adds: “εξ Αιγυπτου.”

³⁵⁶ LXX adds: “and Benjamin.”

³⁵⁷ LXX: “την συναγωγην.”

³⁵⁸ At this point, in the LXX there is a long variant which will appear as an Addendum at the end of the chapter in this translation.

³⁵⁹ The location of Penuel was east of the Jordan River, near the river Jabbok. This location was almost directly east of Shechem and would be the outer defense of the land.

³⁶⁰ Literally: “the heart of the people”

people will be turned again to their Lord and they will kill me and return to *Rehoboam* king of Judah.”²⁸ As a result the king sought the counsel [*of his advisors*] and made two golden bull calves,³⁶¹ telling the people, “You have traveled to Jerusalem long enough. Look! Here are your gods who brought you up from the land of Egypt.”²⁹ He placed one in Bethel and the other in Dan.³⁶²³⁰ This [*worship*] became a sin but the people went to Bethel or to Dan.³⁶³³¹ He also made worship centers on the high places and appointed priests from among the people who were not of the tribe of Levi.³² JEROBOAM designated a feast to be held on the fifteenth day of the eighth month like the feast that took place in Judah, and he offered sacrifices at the altar, doing this in Bethel where he sacrificed bull calves and compelled the priests at the high places to serve as priests in Bethel.³³ He went up to the altar which he had made in Bethel on the fourteenth day of the eighth month which he had ordered, by his own decision, to be a feast for the people of Israel, going up to the altar to burn incense.³⁶⁴

[[Addendum as found in the LXX]]

[[King Solomon died and was buried in the ancestral burial plot in the city of David and *Rehoboam* has son reigned in Jerusalem in his stead. He was sixteen years of age when he began his reign and reigned for twelve years. His mother’s name was Naanan, the daughter of Ana, son of Naas, king of the children of Ammon. He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and did not follow the way of his ancestor David.

There was a man of Mount Ephraim, a servant of Solomon, whose name was JEROBOAM whose mother’s name was Sarian, a prostitute; and Solomon made him head of the levies in the house of Joseph. He built Sarira in Mount Ephraim for Solomon and he had three hundred chariot horses. He built the citadel with the levies of the house of Ephraim. He fortified the city of David and longed to become king. Solomon was anxious to kill him and he became fearful and fled, escaping to Susakim king of Egypt and remained with him until Solomon died.

When JEROBOAM learned that Solomon had died he spoke to King Susakim of Egypt, saying, “Let me go into my homeland,” and Susakim said. “Ask anything of me and I will give it to you.” Susakim gave JEROBOAM Ana, the oldest sister of Thekemina who was Susakim’s wife. She was outstanding among the daughters of the king and she gave birth to his son Abia and JEROBOAM spoke to Susakim, saying, “Let me go! I am anxious to depart.”

JEROBOAM left Egypt and came to the land of Sarira that was in Mount Ephraim where the entire tribe of Ephraim gathers and there he built a fortress.

His young child was gravely ill and JEROBOAM went to inquire about the child, saying to his wife, “Ano, Get up and inquire of God whether the child will recover from his illness.” Now there was a man in Selom whose name was Achia who was sixty years of age and the Lord was with him. JEROBOAM told his wife, “Go and bring loaves for the man of God and cakes for his children. Also bring a pot of honey.” She followed his

³⁶¹ LXX: “heifers.” Cf.: Exodus 32:4.

³⁶² Jeroboam’s action was not only religious but also political. Dan was in the north and Bethel in the south. This would eliminate the distance worshipers would need to travel.

³⁶³ So: LXX. Hebrew: “went to the one as far as Dan.”

³⁶⁴ Scholars do not agree about the dates. Some feel this corresponded with the celebration of the dedication of Solomon’s temple in Jerusalem. Others feel it was one month later than the celebration in Jerusalem. Either way, he established a counterfeit religion from the beginning.

wishes, bringing loaves, cakes, grapes and honey, for Achia who was old and his eyesight had failed. She went to Sarira and as she came to the city of Achia the Selomite Achia told his servant, "Go out now and meet Ano the wife of JEROBOAM and say to her, 'Enter but do not stand still for the Lord says I am sending grievous things that will happen to you.'" Ano went in to the man of God and Achia said to her, "Why have you brought me loaves, cakes, grapes and a pot of honey? Be assured that when you have entered the city of Sarira, your maidens will come to meet you and will say, 'The child is dead.' Thus says the Lord: I will destroy every male of JEROBOAM and those who die in the city among the descendants of JEROBOAM will be eaten by dogs and those who die in the country will be eaten as carrion by the birds. He will lament for the child and say, 'Woe is me, Lord, for some good thing has been found in him regarding the Lord.'"

The woman left upon hearing this and as she entered Sarira the child died and the maidens came out to meet her, wailing. JEROBOAM went to Sikima at Mount Ephraim and called the tribes of Israel together. *Rehoboam* the son of Solomon also went there. The word of the Lord came to Samaias son of Eniemi saying, "Take a new garment for yourself, one that has not yet been washed, and give it to JEROBOAM and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord: Take ten pieces for yourself to cover you,'" JEROBOAM took them. Then Samaias said, "Thus says the Lord concerning the tribes."

The people said to *Rehoboam* the son of Solomon "Your father placed unbearable demands on us and made the provision of food for his table difficult to supply. Now you must lighten these demands that weigh heavily on us and we will serve you." *Rehoboam* said to the people: "Wait three days and I will return to you with an answer." *Rehoboam* called together chief advisors (*or, elders*) and informed them and the chief advisors (*or, elders*) said, "The people have spoken."

Rehoboam repeated their council but did not like it so he brought in those young men whom he had chosen as advisors and counceled with them. The people, however, spoke as one man each to his neighbor, and they called out together

"We have no part in David.

We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse.

To your tents! O Israel,

This man is not a prince or a ruler over us."

Then all the people disbursed from Sikiam and returned to their own tents. *Rehoboam* pulled himself together and left in his chariot and entered Jerusalem. The entire tribe of Judah united with him along with the tribe of Benjamin. At the beginning of the year *Rehoboam* assembled an army and went up to fight JEROBOAM at Sikiam. The word of the Lord came to Samaeas the man of God saying, "Speak to *Rehoboam* king of Judah and to all the house of Judah and Benjamin and to the rest of the people, saying: 'Thus says the Lord. You are not to go to fight with your blood brother, the people of Israel. You are to return home for this is my doing.'" They listened to the word of the Lord and gave up the plan to fight in accordance with the word of the Lord.]]

<CHAPTER 13>

2. *The Man of God from Judah 13:1 – 34*

¹ A man of God who lived in Judah felt commanded by the word of the Lord to go to Bethel. On his arrival JEROBOAM was standing at the altar burning incense. ³⁶⁵ ² The man denounced the altar by the word of the Lord, saying, “O altar, altar, thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, a son will be born to the house of David named Josiah. ³⁶⁶ He will sacrifice the priests of the high places on this altar where you are burning incense. Human bones will be burned on this altar.’” ³⁶⁷ ³ [At the same time] he gave a portent (*or, sign*) ³⁶⁸ [to be fulfilled] that same day saying, “This is the portent (*or, sign*) that the Lord has given: ‘Behold, this altar will break apart and the ashes ³⁶⁹ that are in the altar will spill out.’” ⁴ When the king heard the words of the man of God that he had cried out against the altar at Bethel JEROBOAM stretching out his arm ³⁷⁰ called out: “Arrest this man!” His arm that he had stretched out suddenly was paralyzed ³⁷¹ and could not be moved. ⁵ Moreover at that moment the altar broke and the ashes spilled out as had been declared by the man of God when he gave the portent (*or, sign*). ⁶ The king then pleaded with the man of God, saying: “Entreat ³⁷² the Lord your God, placate him, and pray for me that my arm might be restored to me.” The man of God prayed to the Lord and the king’s arm was restored, becoming as it had been prior to that moment. ⁷ The king then said to the man of God: “Join me in some refreshments at the royal palace. I will also reward you with a gift.” ⁸ The man of God said to the king, “Even if you were to give me half of the royal palace I would not go with you. I will not eat bread or drink water in this place, ⁹ for I am under strict orders by the word of the Lord who said, ‘You will not eat bread or drink water and as you return you are to travel on a different way.’” ¹⁰ He departed taking a different route from the one when he came to Bethel.

¹¹ Now there was a certain old prophet in Bethel. ³⁷³ One of his sons came, telling him all that the man of God had done that day in Bethel. He spoke of the words that were said to the king, telling them to his father. ³⁷⁴ ¹² Their father said, “Which way did he travel? ³⁷⁵ The sons explained to him the way the man of God who came from Judah had gone. ¹³ He said to his sons, “Saddle my donkey.” They saddled the donkey and he mounted it. ¹⁴ He went to find the man of God and found him sitting under an oak (*or, terebinth*) and said to him: “Are you the man of God who came from Judah?” He said, “I am.” ¹⁵ Then he said, “Come home with me and eat some bread.” ¹⁶ The man of God replied, “I am not permitted to go with you, nor am I permitted to eat bread or drink water in this place. ¹⁷ This was told me by the word of the Lord: ‘You will neither eat bread nor drink water there, nor return by the way you came.

³⁶⁵ TAN: “when he ascended to the altar to burn incense.” Footnote: “i. e. at the top of the steps or ramp.”

³⁶⁶ Josiah’s birth was about 300 years later.

³⁶⁷ To burn human bones on an altar would desecrate the altar making it unfit for sacred purposes.

³⁶⁸ Literally: “wonder.” LXX: “το ρημα.”

³⁶⁹ Literally: “fatty ashes.”

³⁷⁰ Literally: “hand.” The gesture seems more appropriate with the use of the word “arm.”

³⁷¹ LXX: “withered.”

³⁷² Literally: “soften the face.”

³⁷³ During that time period a prophet apparently was a lesser servant of the Lord than a man of God.

³⁷⁴ LXX: “and they turned the face of his father.”

³⁷⁵ Literally: “whose is the way he went?”

” 18 The older man said, “I am also a prophet just as you are. An angel ³⁷⁶ spoke to me by the word of the Lord, saying, ‘Bring him back to your home with you that he might eat bread and drink water.’” (He was lying.) 19 The man of God went to the house of the old prophet in Bethel and there he ate bread and drank water.

20 While they were at the table the word of the Lord came to the prophet who had brought the man of God back, 21 and he cried out to the man of God who had come from Judah, “Thus says the Lord: ‘ Because you have flouted (*or, rebelled against*) the word of the Lord and have not kept the commandment which the Lord your God commanded of you, 22 but have gone back and have eaten bread and drunk water in a place where you were not to be for you were to eat no bread and drink no water, your body will not be placed in your ancestral tomb.’” 23 After he had eaten the bread and drunk the water the old prophet saddled the donkey of the man of God who had come from Judah, whom he had brought back to his house. ³⁷⁷ 24 As he went along the road a lion met him ³⁷⁸ and killed him. His body was thrown on the road and the lion and the donkey stood beside the body. 25 Those who passed by saw the body lying on the road and the lion and the donkey standing beside the body as they were going to the city of Bethel. There they told what they had seen. 26 When the prophet who had brought him back heard it he said, “That is the man of God! That is the man who disobeyed the word of the Lord. Because of his disobedience the Lord has provided a lion who mauled him and killed him, in accordance with the word of the Lord.” 27 He said, “Saddle my donkey,” and they saddled it for him. 28 He went and found the body which had been thrown on the road and standing beside the body were the lion and the donkey. The lion had not eaten the body nor had it harmed the donkey. 29 The prophet lifted the body on the donkey and brought it back to the city ³⁷⁹ to mourn and to bury him. 30 He laid the body in his own grave; and he mourned over him, saying: “Alas, my brother!” 31 After the burial had taken place the old prophet told his sons, “When I die bring me to the grave in which the man of God is buried and lay my bones beside his. ³⁸⁰ 32 What he said when he cried out against the altar in Bethel and against worship on the high places in the cities of Samaria will surely be fulfilled!”

33 After this JEROBOAM did not give up his evil ways but continued appointing priests for the high places of worship from among the population. Any who would offer themselves were consecrated ³⁸¹ by him to be priests at the high places. 3 4 By doing this the sin of the dynasty of JEROBOAM was such that it would be cut off and be destroyed from the face of the earth.

³⁷⁶ To have a prophet say an angel appeared was most unusual at this time in history. Angels appeared later on but not normally at this point in Hebrew history. This would make the statement by the prophet of Bethel sound very important and quite urgent. In v. 2 Josiah is mentioned. Some scholars feel these two references imply a late date for the writing of this chapter in I Kings. Other scholars feel these two references have nothing to do with a possible late date in the writing of the chapter.

³⁷⁷ The last phrase is not found in the LXX.

³⁷⁸ In the early period in Palestine there were lions. They virtually disappeared and then during the “Babylonian Captivity” more lions moved back into the area. Once more people returned from the “Babylonian Captivity” the lion population decreased and was wiped out in the area.

³⁷⁹ Hebrew: “to the city of the old prophet.” LXX: “to the city.”

³⁸⁰ LXX: “lay my bones by his bones that my bones may be preserved with his bones.”

³⁸¹ Literally: “to feel the hand.”

<CHAPTER 14>

3, *The Death of JEROBOAM'S Son 14:1 – 18* ³⁸²

1 At that time Abijah the son of JEROBOAM became ill. 2 JEROBOAM said to his wife, "Rise and disguise yourself ³⁸³ so no one recognizes you as the wife of JEROBOAM and go to Shiloh to see the prophet that told me that I would become king over these people. 3 Take ten loaves of bread, some cakes and a jar of honey ³⁸⁴ and go to him. He will tell you what will happen to the child." 4 JEROBOAM'S wife did as he asked and went to Shiloh to the house of Ahijah. Ahijah had become virtually sightless due to his age. 5 The Lord told Ahijah, "Be assured, the wife of JEROBOAM is coming to inquire ³⁸⁵ of you concerning her son. Tell her thus and so: when she comes she will be pretending to be some other woman."

6 When Ahijah heard her footsteps approaching as she was coming in he said: "Enter, wife of JEROBOAM, why are you pretending to be someone else? I am commissioned to give you a difficult message. 7 [Go back to your home and inform JEROBOAM: 'Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: I raised you above all others among the people of Israel and made you to be the leader over my people Israel, 8 separating the kingdom from the house of David, and giving it to you, but you have not been like my servant David who kept my commandments and sought to do my will with his entire being, only doing what was right in my sight, 9 You, however, have acted more evilly than all the kings who have preceded you, making for yourself gods, and metal images, thereby provoking me to anger, turning your back on me. ³⁸⁶ 10 Therefore I will bring disaster on the house of JEROBOAM and will bring an end to every male, ³⁸⁷ both free and slave, and will totally consume the house of JEROBOAM as surely as a man who sweeps the street does when he cleanses it of dung. 11 Anyone belonging to the house of JEROBOAM who dies in the city will be eaten by dogs and anyone of the house of JEROBOAM who dies in the country will become carrion for the birds. I, the Lord have spoken!'] ³⁸⁸ 12 Now: stand up and go back to your home and when your feet enter the city the child will die.] ³⁸⁸ All Israel will mourn for him for he will be the only one from the family of JEROBOAM who will be buried in a grave. This is because in him the Lord the God of Israel has found something pleasing that is a part of the family of JEROBOAM. ³⁸⁹ 14 In addition the Lord will raise up a king over Israel who will bring an end to the house of JEROBOAM now and in the future. 15 The Lord will shake Israel like a reed shaking in water and will root up Israel from the land he had given to their ancestors and will scatter

³⁸² In the LXX this incident is recorded in the addendum attached to chapter 12. In that addendum the event of this portion of chapter 14 takes place prior to JEROBOAM'S becoming king.

³⁸³ Josephus *Antiquities* VIII, 11, 1. says the purpose of wearing the disguise was that the prophet would not recognize her. The Hebrew has the thought that she would not be recognized by the populace.

³⁸⁴ "Cakes" is a word that is variously translated, including: "wafers, crisp biscuits, fig bars" etc. The bottle for the honey is onomatopoeic.(baqbuq) The word sounds like the blurb, blurb when the contents pour out and a bubble of air goes into the bottle. It is thought to be a rather long necked bottle.

³⁸⁵ Literally: "seek a word from."

³⁸⁶ This phrase is used to describe apostasy and is used on several occasions in Hebrew Scripture with that in mind.

³⁸⁷ Literally: "every one who urinates against the wall."

³⁸⁸ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

³⁸⁹ JEROBOAM'S son Nadab met a violent death (15:28) which ended the dynasty.

them beyond the Euphrates River because they made Asherim ³⁹⁰ which have provoked the Lord to anger. ¹⁶ He will give up Israel because of the sins of JEROBOAM which he committed and which caused Israel to sin.”

¹⁷ Then JEROBOAM’S wife stood and departed and came to Tirzah ³⁹¹ and as she came to the threshold of the house the child died. ¹⁸ All Israel buried him and mourned for him as the Lord had said would happen, which he had spoken through his servant Anijah the prophet.

4. *The Death of JEROBOAM 14:19 – 20*

¹⁹ The rest of the acts of JEROBOAM including how he waged war and ruled are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. ²⁰ The time that JEROBOAM reigned was twenty-two years [931 – 910 BCE] and he died (*or, slept with his fathers*) and his son NADAB succeeded him as king of Israel. ³⁹²

5. *Rehoboam of Judah 14:21 – 31*

a. *Characteristics of Rehoboam’s Reign 14:21 – 24* ³⁹³

²¹ Meanwhile *Rehoboam* the son of Solomon reigned over Judah. *Rehoboam* was forty-one years old when he began to reign and he reigned for seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city chosen by the Lord from among all the cities of Israel as the place where his name would be [*celebrated in the temple*]. His mother’s name was Naamah, an Ammonitess. ²² Judah did what was not right in the sight of the Lord who was angered because their sins were greater than those of their ancestors. ²³ They also built high places for themselves as places of worship and Asherim ³⁹⁴ on every high hill and under each green tree. ²⁴ There were even male shrine prostitutes in the land and people engaged in all kinds of detestable practices which were carried out by people of other nations whom the Lord had driven out of Israel. ³⁹⁵

b. *The Invasion of Shishak 14:25 – 28*

²⁵ In the fifth year of the reign of King *Reheboam* Shishak of Egypt ³⁹⁶ invaded Jerusalem. ²⁶ He took all the treasures from the royal palace. Additionally he took the golden shields which Solomon had made. ³⁹⁷ King *Rehoboam* replaced the golden shields with shields made of bronze which were used by the officers of the guard who were the door keepers of the royal palace. ²⁸ Each time the king went to the house of the Lord the guards carried them and then brought them back to the guardroom.

c. *The Death of Rehoboam 14:29 – 31*

²⁹ The rest of the acts of *Rehoboam* and all he did are recorded in the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah. ³⁰ There was continuous warfare between *Rehoboam* and

³⁹⁰ Asherim were wooden poles carved with depictions of idols that were found through all of Israel as places for worship. The Hebrew is a bit uncertain.

³⁹¹ The city was located a few miles north-east of Shechem. Modern day Nablus is thought to be on the site of Tirzah. It was the capital of Israel until Samaria was built. The LXX adds:

“εις την Συριρα.”

³⁹² NADAB ruled in Israel in 909 BCE.

³⁹³ *Rehoboam* reigned from 931 – 913 BCE.

³⁹⁴ See footnote 390.

³⁹⁵ CB: “There were also male devotees of the fetish cult in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord drove out before the Israelites.”

³⁹⁶ Shishak I was a king in the 12th Dynasty. He reigned about 950 BCE. W.F. Albright contends that he reigned from 940 – 920 BCE. While Shishak did not actually enter Jerusalem with his army the items mentioned above were taken as tribute. Cf. II Chronicles 12:1 – 13.

³⁹⁷ Cf.: ANET 263d.

JEROBOAM. ³¹ *Rehoboam* died (*or, slept with his fathers*) and was buried in the ancestral burial plot in the city of David. His mother's name was Naamah the Ammonite. *Abijam* his son succeeded him as king.

<CHAPTER 15>

B. Early Wars Between Israel and Judah 15:1 – 16:28

1, *Abijam of Judah 15:1 – 8*

¹ In the eighteenth year of King JEROBOAM the son of Nebat, *Abijam* ³⁹⁸ began his reign over Judah. ² He reigned in Jerusalem three years. ³⁹⁹ His mother's name was Maacah the daughter of Abishalom ⁴⁰⁰ ³ He followed the sinful example of his father, who preceded him as king, nor was he sincerely faithful to the Lord his God as was his ancestor David. ⁴ Nonetheless for the sake of David the Lord gave him a lamp ⁴⁰¹ in Jerusalem setting up his son and establishing Jerusalem ⁵ because David lived right in the eyes of the Lord and never turned aside from anything that was commanded of him. through out his entire life (except the matter of Uriah the Hittite); ⁴⁰² ⁶ War was constant between *Abijam* ⁴⁰³ and JEROBOAM during *Abijam's* lifetime. ⁴⁰⁴ ⁷ The rest of the acts of *Abijam* and all his deeds are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah. There was war between *Abijam* and JEROBOAM. ⁸ *Abijam* died (*or, slept with his fathers*) ⁴⁰⁵ and he was buried in the city of David. His son *Asa* ascended to the throne.

2. *Asa of Judah 15:9 – 26* ⁴⁰⁶

a. *The King's Reforms 15:9 – 15*

⁹ In the twentieth year ⁴⁰⁷ of JEROBOAM king of Israel *Asa* began to reign in Judah. ¹⁰ He reigned forty-one years in Jerusalem. His [*grand*] mother's name was Maacah ⁴⁰⁸ the daughter of Abishalom ⁴⁰⁹ ¹¹ *Asa* did what was right in the eyes of the Lord just as his ancestor David had done. ¹² He removed the male shrine prostitutes from the land, and destroyed all the idols that his ancestors had made. ¹³ He also deposed his [*grand*] mother ⁴¹⁰ Maacah from the position of Queen Mother because she had made an abominable image ⁴¹¹ [*of the goddess*] Asherah ⁴¹² which *Asa* destroyed as an obscene object which was burned at the brook Kidron. ¹⁴ He did not, however, destroy the high places. ⁴¹³ Nevertheless he was wholly devoted to the Lord during his entire lifetime. ¹⁵ He brought

³⁹⁸ LXX adds: “υιοϛ Ροβοαμ.” “son of Rehoboam.” *Abijam* (or *Abijah*) reigned from 914 – 912 BCE.

³⁹⁹ One LXX Mss has “sixteen years.”

⁴⁰⁰ Some Mss have: “Micalah the daughter of Uriel.” Scholars question the accuracy of the names.

Cf. II Chronicles 13:3, 10. MFT: “the granddaughter of Absalom.”

⁴⁰¹ See footnote 336.

⁴⁰² The last phrase is not in the LXX. Scholars feel it was inserted later by an honest scribe who remembered the incident. Cf. II Samuel 11:1 – 27.

⁴⁰³ Literally: “*Rehoboam*.” Some Mss read “*Abijam*” but most read “*Rehoboam*.”

⁴⁰⁴ This verse is not found in the LXX.

⁴⁰⁵ The LXX inserts: “in the twenty-fourth year of JEHOSHOPHAT.”

⁴⁰⁶ *Asa* ruled from 911 – 871 BCE.

⁴⁰⁷ LXX: “twenty-fourth year.”

⁴⁰⁸ The LXX has the name “Ana.” Scholars question the accuracy of the name for a variety of reasons.

⁴⁰⁹ Many translators say: “the granddaughter of Absalom.”

⁴¹⁰ Literally: “mother.” Examination of the ancestry seems to say “grandmother” is correct.

⁴¹¹ The word is a hapax legomon in Hebrew. The root word means “to tremble” or “to shudder.”

⁴¹² The name is often “Astarte.” Her name is mentioned often in the Ras Shamra Tablets. Originally a Babylonian goddess she was well received by the Semites.

⁴¹³ Some scholars feel that *Asa* must have felt these were acceptable places of worship.

the votive gifts from his father which were silver and gold vessels along with his own votive gifts to the house of the Lord.

b. War Between Asa of Judah and BAASHA of Israel 15:16 – 22

¹⁶ There was war between *Asa* and BAASHA ⁴¹⁴ king of Israel the entire time they reigned. ¹⁷ BAASHA the king of Israel went up against Judah, fortifying Ramah ⁴¹⁵ so he might blockade *Asa* king of Judah. ¹⁸ Then *Asa* took all the silver and golden objects that were left in the house of the Lord and in the royal palace, giving them into the hands of officials who sent them to Benhadad the son of Tabrimmon ⁴¹⁶ the son of Hezion king of Syria who lived in Damascus, saying: ¹⁹ “Let there be an alliance between us as our fathers also had. I am sending you a present of silver and gold. Break your alliance with BAASHA the king of Israel that he may abandon his campaign against me. ²⁰ Benhadad listened to King *Asa* and sent his commanders and army against the cities of Israel and captured Ijon, Dan, Abel-beth-maacah and all of Chinneroth ⁴¹⁷ and the entire land of Naphtali. ²¹ When BAASHA was informed of this he ceased building Ramah and lived in Tirzah. ²² Then King *Asa* proclaimed to all of Judah no one would be exempt for all were to come and carry stones and timbers from Ramah which BAASHA had been using for his fortification. *Asa* then used these building materials to fortify (*or, build*) Geba in Benjamin and Mizpah.

c. Death of Asa 15:23 – 24

²³ Additional information about the acts of *Asa*: about his might and all his achievements along with the cities he built are all found in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah. In his old age he had problems with diseased feet. ²⁴ *Asa* died (*or, slept with his fathers*) in the city of David, his ancestor, and his son *Jehoshaphat* succeeded him as king.

3 NADAB of Israel 15:25 – 32

²⁵ NADAB the son of JEROBOAM began to reign in Israel during the second year of King *Asa*’s reign in Judah and he reigned for two years. ²⁶ He did what was evil in the eyes of the Lord and repeated the sins done by his father, the sins which caused Israel to sin.

²⁷ BAASHA the son of Ahijah of the tribe of Issachar conspired against him and assassinated him at Gibbethon, a Philistine town, where NADAB and the entire army of Israel was besieging Gibbethon. ²⁸ BAASHA assassinated NADAB in the third year of the reign of King *Asa* of Judah and reigned in his stead. ²⁹ As soon as he was accepted as king he slaughtered all of the family of JEROBOAM with the result that not a single member of that family was left breathing. They were all destroyed because of the word of the Lord which he had been spoken by Ahijah the Shilonite. ³⁰ It was because of the sins of JEROBOAM and his leading Israel to sin that provoked the anger of the Lord the God of Israel.

³¹ The rest of the acts of NADAB and all his deeds are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. ³² War was waged between *Asa* and BAASHA during their entire reign.

⁴¹⁴ BAASHA was king of Israel from 909 – 886 BCE.

⁴¹⁵ Ramah was about two hours on foot north of Jerusalem. It marked the northern limits of Judah.

⁴¹⁶ The name means “Rimmon is god.” Rimmon was the Assyrian “storm god.”

⁴¹⁷ This was an area near the Sea of Galilee.

4. BAASHA of Israel 15:33 – 16:7

³³ In the third year of *Asa* king of Judah BAASHAH the son of Ahijah began to reign over all of Israel, residing in Tirzah and he reigned for twenty-four years. ³⁴ He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and repeated the sins done by JEROBOAM ---the sins which had caused Israel to sin.

<CHAPTER 16>

¹ The word of the Lord came to Jehu ⁴¹⁸ the son of Hanani against BAASHA saying: ² “Despite the fact that I raised you out of the dust, making you a leader among my people Israel, ⁴¹⁹ you have followed the ways of JEROBOAM and have led my people to sin, thus provoking me to anger because of their sins. ⁴²⁰ ³ Be certain that I will completely sweep BAASHA ⁴²¹ along with his entire family just as was done with the house of JEROBOAM the son of Nebat. ⁴ Anyone who belongs to the house of BAASHA who dies in the city will be eaten by dogs and anyone who dies in the country will serve as carrion for the birds. “

⁵ Additional events in the life of BAASHA and what he did in his exploits are to be found in the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. ⁶ BAASHA died (*or, slept with his fathers*) and was buried in Tirzah. His son ELAH succeeded him as king. ⁴²² ⁷ [Moreover the word of the Lord came to the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani against BAASHA and his house because of all the evil he had done in the sight of the Lord which provoked the Lord to anger but also because he had been an example of evil for the people just as JEROBOAM had been for the people of Israel.] ⁴²³

5. ELAH of Israel 16:8 – 14

⁸ In the twenty-sixth year of *Asa* the king of Judah ELAH the son of BAASHA began to reign over Israel in Tirzah. He reigned for two years. ⁹ His servant Zimri who was the commander over one half of the chariot regiments conspired against him (*or, committed treason*). While the king was at the house of Arza the overseer of his household in Tirzah, ¹⁰ Zimri entered and murdered the king in the twenty-seventh year of the reign of *Asa* the king of Judah and ZIMRI ruled in his stead.

¹¹ When he began his reign, just as he had seated himself on the throne he had all the members of the house of BAASHI killed, making sure that not a single male ⁴²⁴ within the family or friend of the family would survive. ⁴²⁵ ¹² Thus ZIMRI completely eradicated the house of BAASHA in accordance with the word of the Lord which he had spoken against BAASHA through Jehu the prophet ¹³ for all the sins of BAASHA and the sins of ELAH his son, which they committed and also set the example for Israel to sin openly, for this provoked the Lord the God of Israel to anger because of their idols. ⁴²⁶ ¹⁴ The

⁴¹⁸ Jehu is mentioned by the Chronicler (II Chronicles 20:34) as having written a history which is included in the Book of the Kings of Israel.

⁴¹⁹ TEV: “You were a nobody, but I made you to be a leader of my people.”

⁴²⁰ TAN: “vexing me with their sins.”

⁴²¹ LXX: “consumed.”

⁴²² The grammar of this Hebrew verse is strange. The LXX adds an explanatory gloss.

⁴²³ Some scholars feel this verse is a later gloss.

⁴²⁴ Literally: “one who urinates against the wall.”

⁴²⁵ Zimri tried to prevent a blood feud and also determine that there would be no heirs to any property which had been owned by BAASHA or any relative, no matter how distant.

⁴²⁶ MT: “vanities.”

remainder of the events in the life of ELAN and all that he did are recorded in the Chronicle of the Kings of Israel.

5. *Civil War 16:15 – 22*

¹⁵ In the twenty-seventh year of the reign of King *Asa* of Judah ZIMRI reigned for seven days, ruling from Tirzah. The army of Israel had encamped against Gebbethon, which belonged to the Philistines. ¹⁶ The troops that were encamped for the siege heard the news: “ZIMRI has committed treason and has killed the king!” At that time all of Israel proclaimed OMRI king. OMRI was the Commanding General of the army but on that day was declared to be the king of the land. ⁴²⁷ ¹⁷ Omri went up from Gibbethon accompanied by all of Israel and they besieged Tirzah. ¹⁸ When ZIMRI realized that the city had been taken he went to the keep (*or, citadel*) of the royal palace and set it on fire, dying in the flames. ⁴²⁸ ¹⁹ This occurred because of the sins he had committed, doing evil in the sight of the Lord by living in the same manner as did JEROBOAM ⁴²⁹ as well as for his own sins which he had committed and thereby being an example to Israel of sinfulness. ²⁰ Additional activities of ZIMRI and his treacherous conspiracy are recorded in the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.

²¹ The people of Israel were split into two factions: half being supporters of Tibni the son of Ginath as king, and the others being supporters of Omri to rule Israel. ²² The people who supported Omri overpowered the people who supported Tibni the son of Ginath. Tibni died ⁴³⁰ and OMRI became their king.

7 *OMRI of Israel 16:23 – 28* ⁴³¹

²³ In the thirty-first year of *Asa* king of Judah, OMRI began to reign in Israel and reigned for twelve years, six of which were in Tirzah. ²⁴ He purchased the hill of Samaria from Shemer for two talents of silver ⁴³² and fortified the hill, calling the city which he built Samaria after the house of Shemer, who had owned of the hill.

²⁵ OMRI did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, doing more evil than others who had reigned before him. ²⁶ He followed the kind of life that was lived by JEROBOAM the son of Nebat in addition to his own sins which he committed. All this provoked the anger of the Lord, the God of Israel because of their idolatry. ²⁷ The additional report of the acts of OMRI which he did, the might that he demonstrated: all is written in the book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. ²⁸ OMRI died (*or, slept with his fathers*) and was buried in Tirzah. His son AHAB ruled in his stead.

C. *AHAB and Elijah 16:29 – 22:40*

1. *AHAB of Israel 16:29 – 34* ⁴³³

²⁹ In the thirty-eight year of the reign of King *Asa* of Judah AHAB the son of OMRI began his reign in Israel and reigned over Israel for twenty-two years. ⁴³⁴ ³⁰ AHAB did what was evil before the Lord even more than his royal predecessors. ³¹ It seemed that to him it was unimportant to live as the Lord would desire and he followed the way of

⁴²⁷ OMRI had to overcome two opponents: Tibni and Zimri. TEV: “Then and there all proclaimed their general OMRI king of Israel.”

⁴²⁸ The grammar of the LXX is strange.

⁴²⁹ The LXX adds: “the son of Nebat.”

⁴³⁰ The LXX adds that the half-brother of Tibni also died, whose name was Joram.

⁴³¹ The Moabite Stone reports that “OMRI afflicted Moab many days.”

⁴³² A silver talent was 91 pounds (troy) per talent.

⁴³³ The LXX includes a variant which appear at the end of this chapter.

⁴³⁴ Cf.: ANET 279a.

JEROBOAM the son of Nebat. He took Jezebel ⁴³⁵ the daughter of Ethbaal ⁴³⁶ the king of Sidon as his wife and he served Ba-al and worshiped him. ⁴³⁷ ³² He erected an altar for Ba-al in the temple for Ba-al which he had built in Samaria. ³³ AHAB had an Asherah ⁴³⁸ built. AHAB did more to provoke the Lord the God of Israel into anger than all other kings of Israel had done. ⁴³⁹

³⁴ It was during this time that Hiel of Bethel built Jericho, sacrificing his oldest son Abiram as a foundation sacrifice at the time of the laying of the foundation. It was build over the body of the child. At the cost of his youngest son --- Segub became a gate sacrifice at the time of the erection of the gate to the city in accordance with the word of the Lord as spoken by Joshua. ⁴⁴⁰

[[Addendum in the LXX following v. 28]]

Jehoshaphat made a ship at Tarsus to sail to Sophir for gold, but it did not sail for the ship broke apart at Ezion Geber. Then the king of Israel told *Jehoshaphat* ‘I will send you my servants together with a ship;’ but *Jehoshaphat* would not do so. *Jehoshaphat* died (*or, slept with his fathers*) and was buried with his ancestors in the city of David: and *Jehoram* his son reigned in his stead.

<CHAPTER 17>

2. *The Feeding of Elijah 17:1 24-*

¹ Elijah the Tishbite, the prophet from Tishbe, one of the settlers ⁴⁴¹ in Gilead, told AHAB : “As surely as the Lord the God of Israel lives, in whose presence I stand, there will be no dew nor rain for ⁴⁴² years except when I issue an order for rain with my own mouth”. ² The word of the Lord came to him; ³ “Leave here and go eastward and hide yourself in the ravine of Cherith, ⁴⁴³ which is east of the Jordan. ⁴ You will drink from the brook and I will have the ravens feed you there.” ⁴⁴⁴ ⁵ Therefore he proceeded to do what the Lord had told him and he lived by the brook. ⁶ The ravens brought bread and meat each morning and evening, ⁴⁴⁵ and he drank water from the brook. ⁷ After some time the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the area.

⁴³⁵ Literally: “he contracted his marriage to Jezebel.”

⁴³⁶ Ethbaal had been a priest of Astarte and seized power in Tyre.. To have AHAB as a son-in-law would strengthen his position as king of Tyre and Sidon. An alliance was sealed through the marriage.

⁴³⁷ Cf.: ANET 387c.

⁴³⁸ It is the understanding of scholars that there were two ‘stumps,’ one on each side of the altar. One of these was carved to depict a woman’s private parts. The other depicted the private parts of a man.

⁴³⁹ The LXX differs slightly.

⁴⁴⁰ Cf.: Joshua 6:36. Actual remains of sacrificed children have been found by archaeologists in a number of locations, most notable being Gezer.

⁴⁴¹ Hebrew: “of the settlers.” LXX: “Tishbe.” Modern scholars seem to follow the LXX reading. The above is an attempt to combine the Hebrew and LXX readings.

⁴⁴² The LXX has “three years.” Josephus: *Antiquities* VIII. 13. 2. says the drought lasted five years during the reign of Ethbaal the father of Jezebel..

⁴⁴³ In the present day the ravine (and brook) are called Wadi el-Kelt.

⁴⁴⁴ Some scholars who feel ravens would not become befriended by a person suggest that the word means “Arabians.”

⁴⁴⁵ The LXX says the ravens brought bread in the morning and meat in the evening.

8 The word of the Lord again came to him. 9 “Rise and go to Zarephath ⁴⁴⁶ which is in the region of Sidon and live there. Be assured: I have commanded a widow there to provide food for you.” 10 So he went to Zerephath, and when he arrived at the city gate he saw a widow there who was gathering sticks. He spoke to her, saying, “Please bring me some water in a pitcher that I might quench my thirst.” 11 As she was leaving to get the water he added: “Please also bring along a bit of bread in your hand.” 12 She answered: “As certainly as your Lord lives I have no bread baked ⁴⁴⁷ and I only have a bit of flour left in a pitcher and a bit of oil in a jug. I am gathering some sticks that I can prepare some small biscuits for my son and myself and then we will eat them and die because of the famine. 13 Elijah said to her, “Fear not! ⁴⁴⁸ Just go and do what you had planned but first make a little biscuit and bring it to me, and after that make biscuits for yourself and your son, 14 for the pitcher that holds the flour will not become empty, nor will the jug that holds the oil fail to supply oil. This is the word of the Lord who declares it will remain this way until it rains again.” ⁴⁴⁹ 15 She left and did everything Elijah had told her. She, Elijah and her household ⁴⁵⁰ had a food supply for a long time. ⁴⁵¹ 16 The pitcher that held the flour did not become empty and the jug that held the oil did not fail to supply oil in accordance with the word of the Lord which had been told to Elijah.

17 Some time later the son of the woman (the mistress of the house) ⁴⁵² became ill and his illness became so severe that he stopped breathing. 18 She said to Elijah: “What do you have against me? ⁴⁵³ Man of God you came to me to call attention to the sins I have committed and thereby you have brought about the death of my son.” ⁴⁵⁴ 19 Elijah replied, “Give me your son.” He took the child from her arms and carried him up to the upper room where he lived and laid him on his bed. ⁴⁵⁵ 20 Elijah called out to the Lord: “O Lord my God, why have you brought an additional calamity to this woman with whom I have been staying by killing her son?” ⁴⁵⁶ 21 Then he stretched himself over the boy three times ⁴⁵⁷ and said, “O Lord my God, let the breath of life return again to this child.” 22 The Lord heard Elijah’s plea and the breath of life returned and the child revived. ⁴⁵⁸ 23 Elijah picked up the child and brought it down from the upper chamber and gave the child to its mother. Elijah said, “See! Your son lives!” 24 The woman told Elijah: “Now I definitely know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord proceeds from your mouth!”

⁴⁴⁶ This location is identified by scholars with “Southland” which is located south of Sidon.

⁴⁴⁷ NEB: “I have no food to sustain me..”

⁴⁴⁸ LXX: “Be of good courage.”

⁴⁴⁹ The JB has the words of Elijah’s promise from the Lord as poetry. Neither the BHK or BHS show this to be poetry though the JB makes it quite poetic.

⁴⁵⁰ LXX: “and her son.”

⁴⁵¹ NAB: “one year.”

⁴⁵² Some scholars feel the widow would not have been able to own a house and “the mistress of the house” signifies a different woman. Verse 20 seems to contradict this view to some extent.

⁴⁵³ NEB: “What made you interfere?”

⁴⁵⁴ The Hebrew wording suggests the feeling of undeserved outside interference,

⁴⁵⁵ The upper room would be on the flat roof and accessible through an outside stairway.

⁴⁵⁶ Elijah regarded the death of the boy as totally unjust on the part of God.

⁴⁵⁷ LXX: “breathed into the child.”

⁴⁵⁸ LXX: “the child cried out.”

<CHAPTER 18>

3. *Elijah at Carmel 18:1 – 46*

¹ After a considerable period of time the word of the Lord came to Elijah. In the third year [*of the drought*] the Lord told Elijah: “Go! Show yourself to AHAB and I will send rain upon the earth.” ² Elijah went to appear before AHAB. ⁴⁵⁹ ³ AHAB called Obadiah who was the overseer ⁴⁶⁰ of the household. (Obadiah had a great reverence for the Lord. ⁴ When Jezebel was killing the prophets (*or, sons of the prophets*) ⁴⁶¹ of the Lord, Obadiah had taken one hundred prophets and had hidden them in two caves, fifty in each cave, and provided food: bread and water, for them.) ⁵ AHAB said, “Let us go and search ⁴⁶² all the springs and wadis (*or, valleys*). It is possible that there might be some grass so that we can keep our horses and mules and do not need to kill our livestock.” ⁴⁶³ ⁶ They divided the land between them and went to explore whether there was any possible grass. AHAB went alone in one direction and Obadiah went in the other direction by himself.

⁷ As Obadiah was going along the way suddenly Elijah appeared before him and Obadiah recognized him ⁴⁶⁴ and fell prostrate and said, “It is you, my lord, Elijah.” ⁴⁶⁵ ⁸ His answer was, “It is I. Go tell your master, ‘Elijah is here.’” ⁹ Obadiah said, “What have I done that is so wrong that I would be asked to do that? If I said that to AHAB he would have me killed! ¹⁰ Just as certainly as the Lord your God lives there is no nation or kingdom that the king has not sent [*ambassadors*] to look for you and when they say, ‘He is not here’ they would be forced to take an oath ⁴⁶⁶ for that kingdom or nation that they had not found [*nor seen*] you. ¹¹ And now you tell me to say to the king ‘Elijah is here.’ ¹² As soon as I leave you, the spirit ⁴⁶⁷ of the Lord will carry you to some other place about which I know nothing, and so when I come and tell AHAB and he is unable to find you he will kill me and all this would take place even though I have revered the Lord since my childhood. ¹³ My lord, you have surely been told that when Jezebel was killing all the prophets of the Lord I was hiding men of the Lord, prophets, fifty in a group in one cave, and the same number in a second cave and providing them with food and drink: bread and water. ¹⁴ Now you say, ‘Go tell your lord, Be assured, Elijah is here,’ and he will kill me.” ¹⁵ Elijah responded: “Just as certainly as the Lord of Hosts lives before whom I stand, I will definitely appear before him today!” ¹⁶ Obadiah went to find AHAB and reported to him. AHAB went to meet Elijah. ⁴⁶⁸

¹⁷ When AHAB saw Elijah AHAB said to him, “Is that you, you who make trouble in Israel?” ¹⁸ Elijah replied, “I have been the troublemaker in Israel? You and your father have been the troublemakers for you have forsaken the commandment ⁴⁶⁹ of the Lord and

⁴⁵⁹ The famine had a firm hold on the country and was very serious in Israel.

⁴⁶⁰ LXX: “steward.” NAB: “vizier.” NEB: “comptroller.”

⁴⁶¹ The “sons of the prophets” were a group of prophets who were learning under the leadership of an older prophet. Such schools of the prophets are mentioned in I & II Samuel and I & II Kings.

⁴⁶² The LXX has “you go and look.”

⁴⁶³ LXX: “so they do not perish in the tents.”

⁴⁶⁴ The LXX adds: “and hastened to fall on his face.”

⁴⁶⁵ Did Obadiah know Elijah? Some scholars feel it was only what Obadiah had heard that caused him to recognize Elijah and therefore asked the question.

⁴⁶⁶ LXX: “set fire to.”

⁴⁶⁷ Scholars question whether the Hebrew word “*xwr*” as used here, means “spirit” or “wind.”

⁴⁶⁸ Literally the Hebrew says: “AHAB ran to meet Elijah.” AHAB thought he could control the worship of the Lord in Israel with the worship of Ba al.

⁴⁶⁹ LXX: “the hand your God has provided.”

followed the Ba als.⁴⁷⁰ 19 Now therefore summon all the people of Israel to meet at Mount Carmel and bring the four-hundred fifty priests of Ba al [and the four-hundred priests of Astarte who dine at Jezebel's table].⁴⁷¹

20 AHAB summoned the people of Israel along with the prophets to gather at Mount Carmel.⁴⁷² 21 Elijah approached the people and said, "How long will you limp between two different opinions?"⁴⁷³ If the Lord is God, follow him! If Ba al is God follow him." The people made no reply. 22 Elijah then informed the people of his plan, saying: "I alone am the only prophet left as a prophet of the Lord. Ba al however has four-hundred fifty prophets. 23 Let two young bulls be given and let them choose which one they prefer. Let them cut it in pieces and lay it on the wood on the altar but not light any fire. I will carry out exactly the same procedure. 24 You call on the name of your god and I will call on the name of the Lord, my God.⁴⁷⁴ The God who answers with fire --- that one is God. All the people answered: "Well said!" 25 Then Elijah told the prophets of Ba al, "Select a bull for yourselves and prepare it first (for you are the majority) and call on the name of your god but do not light any fire!" 26 They took the bull they had selected and prepared it, calling on the name of Ba al. This went on from morning to noon as they said, "O Ba al, hear us⁴⁷⁵ and answer us." There was no message of any sort. No one answered. They limped around the altar⁴⁷⁶ which they had made. 27 At noon Elijah mocked them saying, "Shout louder. After all he is a god. He might be meditating, or he might be on the toilet,⁴⁷⁷ on a journey or possibly is asleep and needs to be awakened." 28 They shouted even louder and gashed themselves with swords and lances as was their custom until the blood streamed from them.⁴⁷⁸ 29 They kept on after midday and continued to the time of the sacrifice of the cereal offering but there still was no voice, no sound, no response.

30 Then Elijah spoke to the people. "Come closer to me." All the people moved closer to him. He repaired⁴⁷⁹ the altar of the Lord that had been there but had been damaged. 31 [Elijah took twelve stones in accordance with the number of the sons of Jacob when the word of the Lord came to him saying: "Israel will be your name." 32 With these stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord.]⁴⁸⁰ Elijah made a trench around the

⁴⁷⁰ The Ba als were the local fertility gods who were worshiped in every village fertility shrine.

⁴⁷¹ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation. Cf.: ANET 490d. NEB: "who are Jezebel's pensioners."

⁴⁷² Mount Carmel is the ridge that juts out slightly into the Mediterranean Sea. The fertile plain of Esdraelon is to the south and southeast. The site on Mount Carmel that is thought to be the place where this occurred is called "the place of burning." Near it is Tel el Qassis, the location thought to be where the priests of Ba al were slaughtered.

⁴⁷³ NEB: "straddle the issue."

⁴⁷⁴ "My God" is not found in Hebrew but is in the LXX and seems appropriate.

⁴⁷⁵ So: LXX.

⁴⁷⁶ The reference is to a ritual dance. TAN: "hopping dance."

⁴⁷⁷ LXX: "engaged in his business." The Hebrew word gives the thought of being off in a private place, such as a toilet." TAN: "He might be in a conversation, he may be detained, he may be on a journey or perhaps he is asleep and won't wake up." TEV: "he may be daydreaming, or relieving himself, or perhaps he has gone off on a trip." LB: "perhaps he is talking to someone, seated on the toilet, or maybe he went away on a trip or asleep and needs to be awakened."

⁴⁷⁸ To shed blood on the part of the worshiper is a custom that had already been well established in that region. They worked themselves into a prophetic frenzy.

⁴⁷⁹ Literally: "healed."

⁴⁸⁰ Scholars feel this is a later interpolation. In the LXX this verse is found in the middle of v. 30.

altar that would contain two measures of seed.⁴⁸¹ ³³ He placed wood on the altar, cut the bull into pieces and laid them on the wood. Having done this he said, “Fill four water jars with water and pour the water on the offering that is laid on the altar and on the wood,” and they did so.⁴⁸² ³⁴ He then said, “Do it a second time,” and they did so. He then called that this be done a third time⁴⁸³ ³⁵ The water ran all over the altar and even filled the trench.

³⁶ When it was time for the evening offering (the cereal offering) Elijah called the people to come near and said, “O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be obvious that on this day you are the God of Israel and that I am your servant, and that what I have done today I have done because of your word. ³⁷ Answer me, O Lord, answer me so that these people might know that you, O Lord, are God and that you have turned their hearts back to you.” ³⁸ Then the fire of the Lord⁴⁸⁴ fell and consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones and dust and licked up the water that had been in the trench. ³⁹ Upon seeing this, the people fell on their faces and said: “The Lord --- he is God! He alone is God!” ⁴⁰ Elijah called out to the people: “Seize the prophets of Ba al! Do not let any escape.” The prophets of Ba al were seized and Elijah had them brought down to the book Kishon where they were slaughtered.⁴⁸⁵

⁴¹ Elijah told AHAB “Go and eat and drink for there is the sound and roaring of a cloudburst.” ⁴² So AHAB went to eat and drink. Elijah went up to the top of Mount Carmel and crouched down with his head between his knees. ⁴³ He said to his servant, “Go up now and look toward the sea.” The servant went and looked and said, “There is nothing.” Elijah asked him to go to look seven times. ⁴⁴ The seventh time the servant said, “I see a cloud the size of a human hand on the horizon.” Elijah told his servant, “Go up and tell AHAB ‘Harness your chariot and go so that the rain will not stop you.’”⁴⁸⁶ ⁴⁵ After a brief time the sky grew black with storm clouds and there was a cloudburst. AHAB rode to Jezreel.⁴⁸⁷ ⁴⁶ The Lord gave Elijah strength and he tied up the skirt of his robe and outran AHAB all the way to the entrance of Jezreel.⁴⁸⁸

<CHAPTER 19>

4. *Elijah at Horeb 19:1 – 21*

¹ AHAB told Jezebel⁴⁸⁹ all the details of what Elijah had done⁴⁹⁰ when he had the prophets of Ba al killed with the sword. ² Jezebel then sent a messenger to Elijah, saying: “The gods will do exactly the same to me, and even more, if by this time tomorrow I will

⁴⁸¹ The Hebrew word used, “seah,” was a measure which could contain 2.175 bushels of seed.

⁴⁸² The last phrase is found in the LXX.

⁴⁸³ The water was not to make the burning more difficult but to make it obvious that Elijah had not done some trick to cause the burning.

⁴⁸⁴ The fire of the Lord was associated with the appearance of God. It was looked upon as coming down and causing this phenomenon in a direct response to the prayer by Elijah.

⁴⁸⁵ Cf.: Deuteronomy 13:5; 18:20.

⁴⁸⁶ TAN: “Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.”

⁴⁸⁷ LXX: “AHAB wept and went to Jezreel.”

⁴⁸⁸ The distance from Mount Carmel to Jezreel was about twenty miles. Jezebel was not the sort of woman who would take the killing of the prophets of Ba al lightly.

⁴⁸⁹ LXX manuscripts simply say, “the woman.”

⁴⁹⁰ So: LXX.

not have made your life to end in death.”⁴⁹¹ ³ Elijah was terrified and immediately fled for his life. He came to Beersheba⁴⁹² which belongs to Judah. He left his servant there.

⁴ He, himself, went into the wilderness another day’s journey and coming to a broom tree⁴⁹³ he prayed that he would die during the night, saying: “It is enough, Lord. Take my life for I am as mortal as my ancestors.”⁵ He laid himself down and fell asleep under the broom tree. Suddenly an angel told him, “Rise up and eat.”⁶ Looking about he saw that near his head was a biscuit⁴⁹⁴ which had baked on the hot stones and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then laid down again to sleep. ⁷ The angel of the Lord returned for a second time and touching him said, “Rise and eat. There is a long journey ahead of you!”⁸ He got up and ate and drank and was sustained through the strength of the food, for he went forty days and forty nights until he reached Sinai. ⁹ There he found a cave⁴⁹⁵ [and lodged there. The word of the Lord came to him, asking him, “Elijah what are you doing here?”¹⁰ He replied, “I have been zealous for the Lord the God of Israel and for the people of Israel for they have forsaken your covenant and broken down your altar and killed the prophets with the sword. I, I alone, am left and they are trying to kill me.”¹¹ He said, “Come out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord!”¹² It was then that the Lord passed by and a great and powerful wind split the mountain and shattered rocks before the presence of the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind an earthquake occurred but the Lord was not in the earthquake. ¹³ After the earthquake a fire but the Lord was not in the fire. After the fire there was a soft gentle sound.⁴⁹⁷ ¹⁴ When Elijah heard this he covered his face with his mantle⁴⁹⁸ and went out to stand at the entrance of the cave. It was then that a voice addressed him, saying: “Why are you here, Elijah?”⁴⁹⁹ ¹⁵ Elijah replied, “I have been filled with zeal for the Lord, the God of Hosts; for the people of Israel have forgotten your covenant, shattered your altar and killed the prophets with the sword. I alone am left and they want to kill me.”¹⁶ The Lord said, “Go back the same way in which you came. Go to the wilderness of Damascus and upon arrival you are to anoint⁵⁰⁰ Hazael as the king of Syria.⁵⁰¹ ¹⁷ Also anoint JEHU the son of Nimshi as the king of Israel and Elisha the son of Abel-meholah to be a

⁴⁹¹ The Hebrew clearly shows defiance. Jezebel apparently did not have the power to demand the death of Elijah but she was able to get him out of the territory. LXX: “As certainly as you are Elijah and I am Jezebel, God will do these things to me if I do not make your life, by this time tomorrow, to be like one of them (*the Ba al prophets*).”

⁴⁹² This was the southern edge of the cultivated land, about 80 miles south of Jezreel. Beyond that was the Negeb desert.

⁴⁹³ Some translators use the word “Juniper.” JB: “furze bush.” The bush grows about 10 feet tall and is commonly found in the wadis of the Negeb.

⁴⁹⁴ JB: “scone.”

⁴⁹⁵ The JB has a footnote saying that this is the exact cave which Moses used in Exodus 33:22.

⁴⁹⁶ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

⁴⁹⁷ Literally: “a sound of gentle stillness.” TAN: “a soft murmuring sound.” MFT: “the breath of a light whisper.” LXX: “the voice of a gentle breeze.” The wind, earthquake and fire can be compared to the out-runners of a king who run ahead to prepare the way and herald the king’s coming.

⁴⁹⁸ LXX: “sheepskin.”

⁴⁹⁹ Some scholars feel that this question is suggestive of the spirituality of God.

⁵⁰⁰ This would involve pouring oil on the head of the one selected to be king.

⁵⁰¹ Many scholars feel that Elijah would not have had the authority from the Syrians to anoint Hazael. These scholars feel that this was a symbolic acceptance on the part of Hazael toward the work of the prophet. However, Elijah could anoint whoever he might choose, whether it was only symbolic or an actual recognition of Hazael as king of Syria. After all, he had received a message from God.

prophet who will take your place. ¹⁷ Whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, JEHU will kill and whoever escapes death by JEHU will surely be put to death by Elisha. ⁵⁰² ¹⁸ In spite of all this, I have seven thousand in Israel who have never knelt before Ba al nor have their lips kissed him.”

¹⁹ Elijah left there and found Elisha, the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him. He was driving the twelfth yoke as Elijah passed by. Elijah threw his mantle on Elisha. ⁵⁰³ ²⁰ Elisha left the oxen and ran to Elijah, saying, “Let me go and kiss my father and mother and I will follow you.” Elijah replied, “Go back [*to your parents*] and then return [*to me*] for what have I done to you?” ⁵⁰⁴ ²¹ He then left Elijah and taking the yoke of oxen he killed them and, using the [*wooden plow and yoke as fire wood*] ⁵⁰⁵ he boiled the flesh of the oxen which was given to the people. Following this he went to Elijah and became his disciple.

<CHAPTER 20> ⁵⁰⁶

5. AHAB and the Syrians 20:1 – 43

¹ Benhadad who was the king of Syria mustered his army, along with thirty-two vassal kings and their [*their armies*] and these besieged Samaria with all their cavalry and chariots. ² Benhadad sent messengers to AHAB in the city ⁵⁰⁷ of the king of Israel saying: “This is the order of Benhadad: ³ ‘Your silver and gold are mine! Your most beautiful wives and children are also mine.’” ⁵⁰⁸ ⁴ The reply of the king of Israel was, “My lord, I will do as you say. I and all I have is yours.” ⁵ The messengers came again, saying: “Thus says the King Benhadad, ‘I sent messengers saying that your silver, gold, beautiful wives and children are mine. ⁶ Additionally: tomorrow I will send my servants to you at about this time and they will ransack your palace and the houses of your servants and they will take away whatever they please” ⁵⁰⁹

⁷ Then the king called together all his counselors and said: “Be aware how this man is seeking to make trouble. ⁵¹⁰ He has demanded my wives, children, silver and gold and I did not refuse.” ⁸ All of his counselors and the people said, “Do not obey! Do not submit!” ⁹ He therefore replied to the messengers of Benhadad, saying: “I will do all that your first demanded but I will not accede to your second request.” The messengers left to

⁵⁰² Cf.: ANET 282a.

⁵⁰³ This was tantamount to the divine call to be a prophet. It was a sign that Elijah wanted Elisha to follow him. The prophet’s mantle seems to have been skin, perhaps goat, with the hair turned to the outside. It was the distinctive clothing of a prophet.

⁵⁰⁴ The translation is an attempt to clarify a difficult verse. Elisha realized that he had been anointed in the name of the Lord for special service. Elijah’s answer apparently had the concept, “I have done nothing to you which would deny a proper leave taking from your parents.”

⁵⁰⁵ JB: “the plow.” NEB: “the wooden gear.” NIV: “the plowing equipment.” NASB: “implements.”

⁵⁰⁶ Some scholars move chapter 20 to have it follow chapter 21. That is the way the chapters appear in the LXX.

⁵⁰⁷ AHAB seems to have made a vassal of Syria at this time. He inherited this situation from his father OMRI who had added territory from Syria and Damascus. The battle that takes place is known in history as the Battle of Qarqar. 853 BCE.

⁵⁰⁸ This verse could also be read as a question. There is a difference on the part of translators whether the wives and children are demanded at this point or a bit later in verse 7. MFT & JB: “but you may keep your wives and children.”

⁵⁰⁹ So: LXX. Literally: “all desirable objects.” Hebrew literally: “what pleases you.”

⁵¹⁰ LXX: “mischief.”

bring the reply to Benhadad. ¹⁰ Benhadad sent the messengers back, saying: “Let the gods do to me what I intend to do to you, and even more, if I do not destroy Samaria so completely that all that will remain will be a handful of dust for each one of my warriors.” ⁵¹¹ ¹¹ The king of Israel replied, “A real soldier does not brag until the battle is over.” ⁵¹² ¹² When Benhadad heard ⁵¹³ this reply he was drinking with the vassal kings in the general’s quarters ⁵¹⁴ where he told his officers, “Prepare the assault.” ⁵¹⁵

¹³ Meanwhile a prophet had come to King AHAB of Israel and said, “Thus says the Lord! Have you seen this great multitude? Be assured that today I will see that you will win over them, and that your army will realize that I am the Lord.” ¹⁴ AHAB said, “Who will do that?” The prophet’s words were: “Thus says the Lord: The militias of the feudal kings from their districts.” ⁵¹⁶ Then the AHAB went on to say, “Who will begin the battle?” ⁵¹⁷ He answered: “You.” ¹⁵ AHAB then mustered the army from the militia districts of the feudal kings which numbered two hundred thirty-two, and then proceeded to muster all the people of Israel into an army which numbered seven thousand.

¹⁶ They made a sortie at noon while Benhadad was drinking in the general’s quarters. AHAB was assisted by the militias of the vassal kings. ¹⁷ The militias of the vassal kings attacked first and Benhadad sent out servants to discern what was happening. The reported: “Men are coming out from Samaria.” ⁵¹⁸ ¹⁸ Benhadad said, “If they come for war or come for peace, capture them alive.”

¹⁹ The soldiers from Samaria made a sortie, coming from the city. This sortie was led by the militias of the vassal kings followed by the army of Israel. ²⁰ Each soldier killed his man! The Syrians fled and were pursued by Israel while Benhadad, king of Syria escaped on a horse with the cavalry. ⁵¹⁹ ²¹ The army of the king of Israel advanced, capturing ⁵²⁰ horses and chariots and inflicting a great defeat for the Syrians ⁵²¹

²² The prophet then approached the king of Israel and told him, “Strengthen your position and attend to what needs to be done for next spring the king of Syria will come to attack you.”

²³ The aides of the king of Syria said, “Their gods are gods of the hills and that is why they were stronger than our gods who are gods of the plains. ⁵²² We will see that we fight against them next time on the plain and we will be stronger than they. ²⁴ In addition,

⁵¹¹ Literally: “for those at my feet.” LXX: “for foxes.”

⁵¹² The purpose of the quote is surely intimidation. These words are very likely a proverbial saying. LXX: “Do not let the humpbacked boast as if he were upright.” NEB: “Remind him of the saying, ‘The lame must not think himself a match for the nimble.’” ANET: 425b.

⁵¹³ LXX: “οτε απεκριθη αυτω.”

⁵¹⁴ Literally: “the booths” or “tents.”

⁵¹⁵ LXX: “build a mound.”

⁵¹⁶ The word for “districts” is a late Aramaic word written in Hebrew script.

⁵¹⁷ ANET: 476d

⁵¹⁸ The text of the LXX is much more clear than the Hebrew text.

⁵¹⁹ LXX: “each man killed the man next to him, and a second time killed man next to him, and the Syrians fled.” The reference to the horse Benhadad used, it might have been a ‘chariot horse’ Literally: “a horse with the sons of the country.”

⁵²⁰ So: LXX. Hebrew: “killed.”

⁵²¹ The LXX implies that the defeat of the Syrians was the last battle between those two nations.

⁵²² The translation of this verse is based on the LXX. The assumption is that because Syrians belittled the greatness of Israel’s God they are to receive punishment. They implied that the God of Israel was limited in power to the hilly area.

do this: remove the vassal kings from their positions and fill those positions with Satraps, 25 Muster an army of exactly the same size: horse for horse, chariot for chariot, Then we will fight against them on the plain and surely will be stronger than they.”

26 When the year began ⁵²³ Benhadad mobilized the Syrian army and they went to Aphek ⁵²⁴ to fight against Israel. 27 The army of Israel was mustered and provisioned. They then went to engage in battle with the Syrian army. The army of Israel appeared to be like two small flocks of goats in comparison with the huge army of Syria ⁵²⁵ for the Syrian army appeared to fill the entire countryside. 28 A man of God came near and approached the king of Israel, saying, “Thus says the Lord: The Syrians have said, ‘The Lord is a god of the hills but is not a god of the valleys.’ In the light of this I will give this huge army into your hands and you will know that I am the Lord!” 29 They encamped on opposite sides of a wadi (*or, valley*). ⁵²⁶ On the seventh day the battle was joined, and the people of Israel attacked the Syrians, killing one hundred thousand infantry in one day. 30 The survivors fled into the city of Aphek. The wall of the city fell and in falling killed twenty-seven thousand who had survived the battle. ⁵²⁷

Benhadad also fled and hid in an inner chamber ⁵²⁸ of a house in Aphek. 31 His servants spoke to him, saying: “We have heard that the Israelites are magnanimous. Let us put sackcloth around our loins and a rope around our necks, ⁵²⁹ and we will go out to the king of Israel. Perhaps he will spare your life.” 32 They dressed as they had planned with sackcloth and the rope around their necks, and went to the king of Israel, saying: “Your servant Benhadad says, “Please let me live.” AHAB replied, “Is he still living? He is my brother.” ⁵³⁰ 33 The servants of Benhadad were looking for an omen and they quickly said. “Yes, your brother, Benhadad lives.” AHAB then asked that he be brought, and Benhadad came to him and AHAB invited him to come into his chariot. 34 Benhadad told AHAB “The cities that my father took from you I will return to you and you are permitted to open a bazaar in Damascus just as my father had done in Samaria.” AHAB replied, “I will let you go free; based on these terms.” The terms of the treaty were worked out and Benhadad was freed.

35 A certain man from among the members of the prophetic guild said to his fellow prophet ⁵³¹ “Please hit me.” The man refused to hit him. ⁵³² 36 Then the prophet said, “Because you have not obeyed the voice of the Lord, be assured that when you leave my presence a lion will kill you upon leaving this place. When he left a lion killed

⁵²³ The year began in spring.

⁵²⁴ The exact location is debated by scholars. Some choose the Plain of Esdraelon, others the Plain of Sharon. Some feel it was east of the Sea of Galilee.

⁵²⁵ The meaning is uncertain.

⁵²⁶ It was customary to face one’s opponents and boast about the army and generally raise the spirit of the troops prior to any battle. Cf. David & Goliath I Samuel 17:1ff.

⁵²⁷ Would it be possible that the falling of a wall would crush that number of people? Scholars feel that the result of the wall’s falling caused that great number to be slaughtered. It is also possible that there was an exaggeration of the number who died.

⁵²⁸ TEV: “the back room of a house.”

⁵²⁹ Literally: “a rope around our head.” “Neck” seems to give a greater suggestion of willing subservience. In Egypt slaves wore sackcloth which was a way of acknowledging their subservience.

⁵³⁰ An expression of friendship. One translator uses the word “cousin.”

⁵³¹ Literally: “neighbor.”

⁵³² This passage seems to be from a different story which no doubt was deemed to be important and became a later interpolation into this chapter.

him. Then the prophet found a different person and said, “Please hit me.” The man struck him and wounded him. ³⁸ The prophet left and went to a place where the king would pass. He disguised himself and covered his eyes with a bandage. ³⁹ As the king was passing he called out, “A soldier was brought to me in the midst of the battle and I was told, ‘Guard this man. If he is missing your life will be exchanged for his (*or, You will die in his place*) or you will need to pay a talent of silver. ⁵³³ ⁴⁰ While I, your servant, was busy ⁵³⁴ he escaped.” The king of Israel said, “Your sentence is obvious. You have pronounced sentence on yourself.” ⁴¹ Then he hurriedly took off the bandage over his eyes and the king of Israel recognized him as one of the prophets. ⁴² The prophet said to the king: “Thus says the Lord: Because you have freed the man whom I had doomed, your life will pay for his life. I had declared that he be put to death, thus you must pay with your life, and your people must pay for the actions of his people.” ⁴³ The king of Israel went toward his palace, worried and depressed and came to Samaria.

<CHAPTER 21>

6. Naboth’s Vineyard 21:1 – 24

a. Naboth’s Refusal 21:1 - 4

¹ Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard in Jezreel adjoining the palace ⁵³⁵ of AHAB, king of Samaria. ² [*On a later occasion*] AHAB said to Naboth, “Give me your vineyard ⁵³⁶ that I might have it for a vegetable (*or, herb*) garden, since it is near the palace, and I will give you a better vineyard in exchange. Should you, however, prefer ⁵³⁷ money I will pay a fair price for the property.” ³ Naboth responded to AHAB, “The Lord forbid that I should give you my patrimonial inheritance.” ⁴ AHAB went into his house and was despondent and sullen ⁵³⁸ because of Naboth the Jezreelite’s reply to his request in which he said, “I will not give you my patrimonial inheritance.” He lay on his bed, facing the wall, and would not eat.

b. Jezebel’s Plot 21:5 - 12

⁵ His wife, Jezebel came to him and said, “Why are you so upset that you refuse to eat?” ⁶ He replied, “Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite and said, ‘Give me your vineyard and I will pay you, or should you desire, I will give you a better vineyard in exchange for yours,’ and he replied, ‘I will not give you my vineyard.’” ⁷ AHAB’S wife Jezebel said, “Don’t you, yourself, ⁵³⁹ rule ⁵⁴⁰ Israel? Get up and eat food, ⁵⁴¹ be yourself again, ⁵⁴² for I will get you the vineyard that belongs to Naboth the Jezreelite.”

⁸ Jezebel wrote letters ⁵⁴³ in AHAB’S name and sealed them with his official seal, and sent these letters to the elders and the nobles ⁵⁴⁴ who lived in the same city with

⁵³³ A talent was 91 pounds of silver.

⁵³⁴ LXX: “παρειβλεψατο.”

⁵³⁵ LXX: “near the threshing floor.”

⁵³⁶ The vineyard came to Naboth through the laws dealing with patrimony. This was hereditary property and it was within his legal right that he should keep it within the family, even if the king wanted the land.

⁵³⁷ Literally: “if it is good in your eyes.”

⁵³⁸ LXX: “the spirit of AHAB was troubled and he lay down in his bed and covered his face and did not eat.” TAN: “dispirited and sullen.” NRSV: “resentful and sullen.”

⁵³⁹ So: LXX.

⁵⁴⁰ Literally: “exercise kingship.” JB: “You make a fine king, and no mistake.”

⁵⁴¹ Literally: “bread.”

⁵⁴² So: LXX.

⁵⁴³ LXX: “books.”

Naboth. ⁹ In her letter she wrote: “Proclaim a fast, ⁵⁴⁵ and seat Naboth on the seat of honor in front all those who have assembled. ¹⁰ Seat two unscrupulous men ⁵⁴⁶ opposite Naboth and let them testify against him using a single accusation, saying, ‘You have reviled God and the king.’ Then take him out and stone him till he dies.” ¹¹ The townsmen, elders and nobles, who resided in the city did exactly as Jezebel had instructed them ⁵⁴⁷ and followed what had been required of them in the letter that had been sent. ¹² They proclaimed a fast and placed Naboth in the seat of honor before all those who had assembled.

c. Naboth’s Death 21:13 – 16

¹³ The two unscrupulous men entered and seated themselves opposite Naboth. They accused Naboth and testified publicly against Naboth, ⁵⁴⁸ saying, “Naboth has reviled God and the king.” They took Naboth outside the city and he was stoned until he died. ¹⁴ Then word was sent to Jezebel, saying, “Naboth has been stoned. He is dead.”

¹⁵ As soon as Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead she said to AHAB “Get up! Take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you in exchange for payment, for Naboth is dead.” ¹⁶ As soon as AHAB heard that Naboth was dead he rose up and went to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite to take possession of it. ⁵⁴⁹

d. Elijah’s Intervention 21:17 – 29

¹⁷ Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite saying: ¹⁸ “Rise up and go down to meet AHAB king of Israel who is in Samaria. He is in the vineyard of Naboth for he has gone there to take possession of it. ¹⁹ You are to confront him saying, ‘Thus says the Lord: Would you murder and also take?’ ⁵⁵⁰ Also say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord: In the exact place where the dogs ⁵⁵¹ have licked up the blood of Naboth the dogs will also lick up your blood.’” ⁵⁵²

²⁰ AHAB said to Elijah, “Have you found me, O my enemy?” Elijah replied. “I have found you because you have committed yourself to do evil ⁵⁵³ in the sight of the Lord. ⁵⁵⁴ ²¹ I will bring disaster upon you; I will utterly sweep you away (*or, end your family’s existence*) ⁵⁵⁵ and will cut off every male, ⁵⁵⁶ slave or free. ²² I will make your

⁵⁴⁴ The Hebrew word means “freeborn” or “freemen.” These people had a high station in society. The word is of Aramaic origin and possibly was an interpolation in the Hebrew text. It is not found in the LXX.

⁵⁴⁵ This was usually done at the time of some grave national emergency which might endanger all the people. The purpose was to show the Lord that those who take part in the fast are repentant of their sinfulness. In that sense it was a declaration of sinfulness and the need for forgiveness.

⁵⁴⁶ Literally: “sons of Belial.” “Lewd fellows of a baser sort.” :LXX: “sons of transgressors.”

⁵⁴⁷ The leaders in the city were as corrupt as the king and queen.

⁵⁴⁸ The accusation that was trumped up referred to a crime mentioned in Exodus 22:28. “You shall not revile God or curse a leader of your people.”

⁵⁴⁹ According to II Kings 9:26 Naboth’s sons were stoned and died. This was done to prevent a curse, for the sons were felt to be agents in the matter of property. The LXX adds: “AHAB tore his garments and put on sackcloth.” Josephus *Antiquities VIII, 13, 8* “AHAB was glad at what had been done, and rose up immediately from his bed where he had been lying.”

⁵⁵⁰ JB: “you have committed murder, and now you usurp as well.”

⁵⁵¹ LXX adds: “and swine.”

⁵⁵² The LXX adds: “and the prostitutes will wash themselves in your blood.”

⁵⁵³ JB: “because of your double dealing.”

⁵⁵⁴ The LXX adds: “to provoke him to anger.”

⁵⁵⁵ TAN: “make a clean sweep of you.”

⁵⁵⁶ Literally: “every one who urinates against the wall.”

house like the house of JEREBOAM the son of Nebat, and the house of BAASHA the son of Ahijah, for the provocation you have caused by leading Israel to sin. ²³ [The Lord has also said concerning Jezebel, ‘The dogs will eat Jezebel by the ramparts (*or, wall*) ⁵⁵⁷ of Jezreel. ⁵⁵⁸ ²⁴ Anyone who belongs to the family of AHAB who dies in the city the dogs will eat and anyone who dies in the country will become as carrion for the birds.’”

²⁵ There never was anyone else who was as committed to do what was displeasing to the Lord as AHAB at the instigation of his wife, Jezebel. ²⁶ He did exceedingly abominable things; going astray by following idols as the Amorites had done. The Lord had dispossessed them from the land in favor of the Israelites.] ⁵⁵⁹

²⁷ When AHAB heard these words he tore his garments and wore sackcloth over his flesh and lay in sackcloth. He moved about dejectedly (*or, meekly*). ²⁸ The word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite saying, ⁵⁶⁰ ²⁹ “Have you seen how AHAB has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself before me I will not bring the evil in his days, but in his son’s days. I will bring evil on his house.”

<CHAPTER 22>

7. AHAB’S Last Battle 22:1 – 40

¹ There was a lull in the warfare ⁵⁶¹ between Syria and Israel for three years. ² In the third year King *Jehoshaphat* of Judah went to visit the king of Israel. ³ The king of Israel had told his courtiers: “Are you aware that our city, Ramoth-gilead has been occupied by the Syrians and we are doing nothing about it? ⁵⁶² We have kept silent and we are very slow to act and do not try to take it from the king of Syria.” ⁴ The king of Israel asked *Jehoshaphat* “Will you join me in battle to regain Ramoth-gilead?” *Jehoshaphat* replied, “I will do what you do. ⁵⁶³ My army will be united with your army and my cavalry will be united with your cavalry.”

⁵ *Jehoshaphat* added, in his conversation with the king of Israel “However, let us ask what the word of the Lord might be.” ⁶ Then the king of Israel called the prophets ⁵⁶⁴ together, about four hundred men, and asked: “Should I make war against Syria and will I win if I go to war?” They said, “March! The Lord will be with you and give the land you seek into your hand.” ⁷ *Jehoshaphat* said, “Isn’t there some other prophet in the land that we can make a further inquiry?” ⁸ The king of Israel replied to *Jehoshaphat* saying, “There is one other of whom we can inquire of the Lord, Micaiah the son of Imlah, but I despise him. He never prophesies anything good for me, only misfortune.” *Jehoshaphat* said, “That is not the way to talk.” ⁹ The king of Israel then summoned an officer, saying: “Hurry! Bring Micaiah the son of Imlah immediately.” ¹⁰ The king of Israel and King *Jehoshaphat* of Judah were on the threshing floor at the entrance gate of Samaria, seated on their royal thrones, dressed in their royal robes. ⁵⁶⁵ and the prophets were giving exotic prophecies before them. ¹¹ Zedokiah the son of Chenaanah had made a iron horns for

⁵⁵⁷ The word “ramparts” is found in a number of Hebrew manuscripts.

⁵⁵⁸ Some scholars feel vs 23 is a later interpolation based on II Kings 9:36.

⁵⁵⁹ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

⁵⁶⁰ LXX: “εν χειρ δουλου αυτου Ηλειου Αχαραβ και ειπεν κυριους.”

⁵⁶¹ Literally: “they sat for three years.”

⁵⁶² Apparently this territory was to be returned to Israel by Benhadad after the battle of Aphek. Cf.: 20:34.

⁵⁶³ TEV: “Ready when you are.”

⁵⁶⁴ LXX: “all of the prophets.”

⁵⁶⁵ This location was the traditional seat of justice.

himself, and with them in hand said, “Thus says the Lord: With these horns you will be enabled to pass through ⁵⁶⁶ the Syrian foes and destroying them.” ¹² All the prophets were prophesying and saying: “March! Attack Ramoth-gilead and you will triumph for the Lord will give it into the hand of the king.” ⁵⁶⁷

¹³ The officer who went to summon Micaiah said: “Now look here! The prophecies ⁵⁶⁸ of the prophets are unanimously in favor of the king! Let your prophecy be the same as theirs and speak favorably.” ¹⁴ Micaiah said, “As certainly as the Lord is alive, I will simply say what the Lord says to me. That is what I will say.” ¹⁵ When he arrived in the presence of the kings the king [of *Israel*] said to him, “Micaiah, will our attack on Ramoth-gilead be triumphant or should we delay it?” He answered: “Go in triumph for the Lord will give it over into your hand, O king.” ¹⁶ The king said to him: “How often do I need to warn you that you are to speak the truth in the name of the Lord?” ¹⁷ Then Micaiah replied:

“I saw all Israel,
scattered across the mountain
like sheep that have no shepherd
and the Lord said,
‘These have no master:
let each of them return home in peace.’”

¹⁸ The king of Israel said to *Jehoshaphat* “Didn’t I tell you! He never prophesies anything good about me --- only misfortune [*or, disaster*].” ¹⁹ Micaiah said, “Now then! Hear this! The word of the Lord ⁵⁶⁹ came to me. I saw the Lord sitting on his throne and the host of heaven was with him, standing at his right and at his left. ²⁰ The Lord asked: ‘Who will lure AHAB so that he will go in battle against Ramoth-gilead and fail?’ ⁵⁷⁰ A variety of suggestions were presented and dismissed. ²¹ Then a spirit came forward and said, ‘I will entice him.’ ²² The Lord asked: ‘How?’ He said, ‘I will go to him as a spirit of deception from the mouths of his prophets.’ The Lord’s response was, ‘You are to entice him. Go ahead. Do it.’ ²³ You will discover that the Lord has put spirit of deception into the prophets and you will realize that disaster is about to strike you. “

²⁴ Then Zedekiah the son of Chenanath came near and slapped the face of Micaiah, saying: “How could the spirit of the Lord ever have passed from me to you?” ²⁵ Micaiah said, “You will understand that on the day when you sneak into an inner room to hide yourself.” ²⁶ The king of Israel called out: “Seize Micaiah and have him committed to the custody of Amon the governor of the city and Joash the king’s deputy. ⁵⁷¹ ²⁷ Inform them that this is an official order from the king! Put this fellow into prison and give him the prison diet --- a scanty amount of bread and water. ⁵⁷² This sentence will continue until I return [*from the battle*] in peace.” ²⁸ Micaiah said, “If you return safely you can be assured that the Lord has not spoken to me. Listen! All you who say you are prophets!”

⁵⁶⁶ LXX: “gore Syrians until they are destroyed.”

⁵⁶⁷ The LXX adds: “εις σου τον βασιλευα Συριας.”

⁵⁶⁸ LXX: “all the prophecies.”

⁵⁶⁹ The LXX adds: “the God of Israel.”

⁵⁷⁰ Literally: “fall.” The thought is that AHAB is to die in the battle.

⁵⁷¹ Literally: “to Joash the king’s son.”

⁵⁷² Literally: “the bread of affliction and the water of affliction.”

29 Then the king of Israel and *Jehoshaphat* the king of Judah went to Ramoth-gilead. 30 The king of Israel said to *Jehoshaphat* “I will disguise myself ⁵⁷³ and go into battle. You, however, are to wear your royal robes.” ⁵⁷⁴ Then the king of Israel went into battle. 31 The king of Syria had commanded his thirty-two commanding officers of his charioteers saying, “Do not fight with officers or enlisted men, ⁵⁷⁵ but only engage in battle with the king of Israel.” 32 When the captains of the charioteers saw *Jehoshaphat* they said, “That must be the king of Israel.” As they turned their chariots they heard *Jehoshaphat* call out. 33 When they realized that this was not the king of Israel they turned their chariots and gave up pursuing *Jehoshaphat*. 34 One of the warriors drew his bow without taking any aim and struck the king of Israel at the point where the pieces of armor that comprised his breastplate meet. ⁵⁷⁶ The king told the charioteer “Turn and carry me away from the battle line, for I am severely wounded.” 35 The battle raged on through the entire day and the king remained propped up in his chariot facing the Syrian army until nightfall at which time he died. The blood from his wound had run down onto the floor of his chariot. 36 When he had died at dusk a cry went out to the army, “Every man retreat to his city, every man retreat to his country!”

37 The king died and his body was brought ⁵⁷⁷ to Samaria. 38 They flushed the blood from the chariot at the pool of Siloam (where the prostitutes bathe) and the dogs ⁵⁷⁸ lapped up his blood. ⁵⁷⁹ This was in accordance with the word that the Lord had spoken. ⁵⁸⁰

39 The additional events in the life of AHAB and how he built his palace of ivory and all the cities he built are to be found in The Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. 40 AHAB was buried (*or, slept with his fathers*) and his son AHAZIAH succeed him on the throne.

D.Elisha Narrations 22:41 – II Kings 8:29

1. Jehoshaphat of Judah 22:41- 50

41 *Jehoshaphat* the son of *Asa* began his reign in Judah in the fourth year of AHAB king of Israel. 42 *Jehoshaphat* was thirty-five years old when he began his reign and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. 43 He carefully followed the example of his father *Asa* and did not depart from it, doing what pleased the Lord, [H. 44] yet the hill shrines were allowed to remain. The people sacrificed and burned incense at these hill shrines. 44 [H. 45] *Jehoshaphat* also made a treaty with the king of Israel.

45 [H. 46] The additional acts of *Jehoshaphat* concerning the might which he showed and the wars he led are all recorded in The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah. 46 [H. 47] He ridded the land of the male shrine prostitutes which remained from the time of his father’s reign. ⁵⁸¹

⁵⁷³ So: Targum and LXX.

⁵⁷⁴ The LXX says “he wore AHAB’s robes.”

⁵⁷⁵ Literally: “small or great.”

⁵⁷⁶ The Hebrew is uncertain. Literally: “scale armor.” The impression is that there were overlapping pieces of armor, presumably leather, and the arrow penetrated in the area near the larger breastplate.

⁵⁷⁷ Literally: “he came to Samaria.”

⁵⁷⁸ LXX has: “swine and dogs.”

⁵⁷⁹ Some Hebrew manuscripts have a variant saying, “they went to Samaria and cleaned their weapons.”

⁵⁸⁰ Cf.: 21:19.

⁵⁸¹ CB: “male devotees of the fertility cult who remained in the days of his father *Asa*. He eradicated them from the land.”

47 [H. 48] There was no king in Edom, only a viceroy ⁵⁸² who ruled. 48 [H. 49] *Jehoshaphat* constructed merchant ships, large sea going vessels, to go to Ophir for gold, but they did not sail since they floundered near Ezion-geber. 49 [H. 50] Then AHAZIAH the son of AHAB suggested to *Jehoshaphat* “Let my servants join your servants in sailing the ships,” but *Jehoshaphat* would not agree to that. 50 [H. 51] *Jehoshaphat* ⁵⁸³ died and was buried (*or, slept with his fathers*) in the city of David and his son *Jehoram* reigned in his stead.

2. AHAZIAH of Israel 22:51 – II Kings 1:18

51 [H. 52] Meanwhile AHAZIAH the son of AHAB began his rule in Israel, living in Samaria in the seventeenth year of the reign of King *Jehoshaphat* of Judah and he reigned over Israel for two years. 62 [H. 53] He did what displeased the Lord and lived as did his father and his mother, living after the manner of his ancestor JEROBOAM the son of Nebat who caused Israel to sin. 53 [H. 54] He worshiped Ba al and served him thus provoking the Lord the God of Israel in every way that had been done by his father.

⁵⁸² An emendation would read: “a viceroy of King *Jehoshaphat*.”

⁵⁸³ The LXX adds: “the king of Judah.”

II Kings

<CHAPTER 1>

¹ [Following AHAB'S death the people of Moab revolted against Israel.] ⁵⁸⁴ ² AHAZIAH fell through the lattice work of the window in his upper room ⁵⁸⁵ in Samaria and, being seriously injured, was confined to his bed. He sent messengers with the instructions, "Go to present yourselves to Baalzebub ⁵⁸⁶ the god of Ekron, ⁵⁸⁷ asking whether I will recover from my illness." ³ The angel of the Lord ⁵⁸⁸ spoke to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, "Arise! Go and interrupt the messengers of the king of Samaria and say to them: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron?'" ⁴ Now listen to the word of the Lord! 'You will not come down from the bed to which you have gone. ⁵⁸⁹ You will surely die.'" Elijah arose and went to meet the messengers.

⁵ The messengers returned to the king and he asked, "Why have you returned so quickly?" ⁶ They replied, "A man came to meet us and he told us, 'Return to the king who sent you and say: This is what the Lord declares: Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron? Because of this you will not be able to come down from the bed to which you have gone. You will surely die.'" ⁷ The king asked, "What did the man look like who met you and spoke to you in this manner?" ⁸ They answered: "He was dressed in haircloth and had a leather belt around his waist." ⁵⁹⁰ Then the king said, "That is Elijah the Tishbite."

⁹ The king then sent a captain and his unit of fifty men [*to Elijah*]. They climbed up to the hilltop where Elijah was seated ⁵⁹¹ and shouted to him, "O man of God, the king orders you to come down!" ¹⁰ Elijah replied to the captain of the fifty men: "If I am a man of God let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your unit of fifty men." Then fire came down from heaven and consumed the captain and his fifty man unit.

¹¹ The king sent another captain and his unit of fifty men. They climbed up to the hilltop and also shouted to Elijah, saying: "O man of God, this is the order of the king! Come down quickly!" ¹² Elijah replied: "If I am a man of God let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your unit of fifty men." Then the fire came down and all were consumed by the fire. ⁵⁹²

⁵⁸⁴ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

⁵⁸⁵ Such an upper room was usually located on the flat roof of the house. Cf.: Nehemiah 3:31. The room was provided with an outside stairway to ground level. Lattice work was used to provide the movement of air to cool the room on the roof top. Glass windows were not yet being made in Israel.

⁵⁸⁶ The word seems to have been deliberately misspelled in Hebrew so that it translates as "The Lord of the Flies." This made it a disparaging remark about the god who was well known though he was thought simply to be the god of Ekron. This was done so there would be no creditability for the idol.

⁵⁸⁷ This was one of five major cities of the Philistines. Cf.: Joshua 13:3. It was located about 15 miles south of present day Jaffa, or forty miles southwest of Samaria.

⁵⁸⁸ This would be a temporary manifestation of God.

⁵⁸⁹ Literally: "You will not descend from the bed you have mounted."

⁵⁹⁰ NEB: "a leather apron." The clothing showed that he was an ascetic prophet. Cf.: John the Baptist Matthew 3:4; Mark 4:6.

⁵⁹¹ Scholars seem to feel that this was Mount Carmel.

⁵⁹² Some scholars feel there is a play on words with "fire" and "man of God." In Hebrew they would sound similar.

13 The king sent a third captain with a unit of fifty men who climbed up and fell on their knees before Elijah. They pleaded with him, saying: “O man of God, I plead with you that my life and the life of these fifty men be spared and grant that we might be considered precious in your sight. 14 Fire has already come down from heaven and consumed the captains and their units of fifty men. I plead with you that my life and the lives of these men might be spared.” 15 Then the angel of the Lord said to Elijah “Go down with them. Do not be fearful!” So Elijah accompanied the captain and his men and went down to see the king. 16 Elijah informed the king, “This is the word of the Lord! Because you have sent messengers to consult Baalzebub the god of Ekron --- does this imply that there is no God in Israel to whom an inquiry can be made? Therefore you will not come down from the bed on which you are lying and you will certainly die.”

17 The word that had been spoken by the prophet was fulfilled and JEHORAM, his brother became king.⁵⁹³ His reign began in the second year of *Joram* the son of *Jehoshaphat* king of Judah. This took place because AHAZIAH had no sons. 19 Additional information about the reign of AHAZIAH is recorded in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.⁵⁹⁴

<CHAPTER 2>

3. Elisha Succeeds Elijah 2:1 – 18

1 The Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by means of a windstorm.⁵⁹⁵ Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. 2 Elijah said to Elisha, “Please stay here for the Lord has sent me⁵⁹⁶ to Bethel.” Elisha replied, “As certainly as the Lord is alive and you yourself live, I will remain with you.” They, therefore, went on to Bethel together. 3 The members of the school of the prophets⁵⁹⁷ came to meet Elisha and said to him, “Do you realize that today the Lord will take⁵⁹⁸ your master from you?” He answered, “Yes, I am aware of that. Don’t remind me of it.”⁵⁹⁹

4 Elijah said, “Elisha, please stay here for the Lord has sent me to Jericho.” Elisha replied, “As certainly as the Lord is alive I will remain with you.” So they came to Jericho. 5 Some members of the school of the prophets located in Jericho spoke to Elisha, saying, “Do you realize that today the Lord will take your master from you?” He replied, “Yes, I am aware of that. Don’t remind me of it.”

⁵⁹³ There are some differences between the Hebrew and LXX texts. The Lucian text seems to have a different recension. The name JEHORAM who was the brother of AHAZIAH is also spelled JORAM. American translators usually use JEHORAM so this king can be differentiated from another king whose name is usually transliterated as JORAM. This is not always the case in translations from other lands, thus providing for some confusion. Both kings reigned at the same time: one in Israel, the other in Judah.

⁵⁹⁴ The LXX adds: “JEHORAM the son of AHAB reigned in Samaria for twelve years beginning his reign in the eighteenth year of the reign of *Jehoshaphat* the king of Judah. He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord but not as evil as his brothers or his mother. He removed the pillars of Ba al which his father had made, smashing them into pieces. However he was affiliated with the kind of sins done by JEROBOAM who led Israel to sin and never stopped. The Lord was very angry with the house of AHAB.”

⁵⁹⁵ The Hebrew reference is to a strong wind, not necessarily a ‘whirlwind.’ This expression is often used to describe the presence of God coming on the human scene.

⁵⁹⁶ Some translators feel the need to clarify and insert: “I and I only am to be sent to...”

⁵⁹⁷ Literally: “the sons of the prophets.”

⁵⁹⁸ Literally: “take from your head.”

⁵⁹⁹ LXX: “Do you know that the Lord is taking [*Elijah*] from you, taking your master into heaven today.” “Don’t remind me” is an attempt to clarify the words that literally say: “Hold your peace.”

6 Then Elijah told Elisha, “Please stay here for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan.” Elisha’s reply was: “As certainly as the Lord lives and you yourself live I will remain with you.” Then the two of them went on. 7 Fifty men from the school of the prophets in Jericho followed, some distance behind and watched as Elijah and Elisha arrived at the bank of the Jordan. 8 Elijah then took his mantle, rolling it up, and with it struck the water of the river which then parted, moving away on either side and they were able to walk across the river bed on dry land. ⁶⁰⁰

9 When they had crossed Elijah said to Elisha, “Ask what gift you would desire of me and I will provide it before I am taken from your presence.” Elisha said “Please give me a double portion of your spirit.” ⁶⁰¹ 10 Elijah said, “You have asked a difficult thing. Now: if you can see me as I am being taken from you this will take place, ⁶⁰² but if you do not see me taken up this will not happen.” 11 They were continuing their conversation when a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two prophets and Elijah was taken away into heaven by a mighty wind (*or, whirlwind*). ⁶⁰³ 12 Elisha witnessed this and cried out, “My father! My father! Those are the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!” Then Elisha was alone.

He seized his own garments tearing them in half. ⁶⁰⁴ 13 He took the mantle of Elijah which had fallen from him, and went back and stood at the brink of the Jordan river. 14 He then took the mantle that had fallen from Elijah and struck the water, saying: “Where is the Lord the God of Elijah now?” ⁶⁰⁵ When he struck the water with the mantle the water was parted in both directions and Elisha walked on.

15 When the men of the school of the prophets from Jericho saw him as he was opposite them, they said, “The spirit of Elijah now resides on Elisha!” They came to meet him and prostrated themselves (*or, did obeisance*) on the ground before him. 16 They said to him, “Please let us send fifty stalwart men who are willing to look for the prophet. Possibly the spirit of the Lord caught hold of him but dropped him on some mountain or in some deep valley.” Elisha said, “You are not to do that.” 17 They kept on urging him until he became embarrassed and relented to their pressure to have a search party look for Elijah. Finally he said, “Go.” The fifty men went and searched for three days but did not find Elijah. 18 They returned to him (Elisha had remained in Jericho) and told him. His response was, “Didn’t I tell you not to go?”

4. *Cleansing the Spring at Jericho 2:19 – 22*

19 Later the men of the city of Jericho said to Elisha, “The location of this city is a pleasant one as you can see. However the water is bad and using it on the land makes the land unproductive. ⁶⁰⁶ 20 Elisha said, “Bring me a new bowl ⁶⁰⁷ and put salt in it.” They

⁶⁰⁰ LXX: “go into the wilderness.”

⁶⁰¹ “A double share” signified the portion given to the first born son. He is saying, “Let me be as a firstborn son to you that I might continue the fulfillment of your prophetic mission.” It is a plea for reassuring confidence that only Elijah could provide. It was not a case of Elisha wanting more than all others from Elijah. LXX: “to be upon me.”

⁶⁰² Literally: “If you have eyes to see the chariot of the Lord --- then your prayer will be answered.”

⁶⁰³ The translation has given rise to a variety of legends, among them, that he is the Jewish ancestor of El Hudr, the eternal wanderer of Islamic faith. El Hudr drank the water of life and never grows old. There is also a legend that Elijah might appear at any time and in any place.

⁶⁰⁴ A traditional sign of grief.

⁶⁰⁵ The LXX adds: ‘but the water had not separated.’

⁶⁰⁶ TAN: “causes bereavement.” Literally: “causes barrenness.” TEV: “causes miscarriages.”

⁶⁰⁷ LXX: “pitcher.” MFT: “flask.”

brought him the bowl with the salt. ²¹ He then went to the spring ⁶⁰⁸ and throwing the salt into it said, “This is the declaration of the Lord. I have purified the water. ⁶⁰⁹ From now on neither death nor barrenness will result from it.” ²² The water has been wholesome since then, just as the Lord had declared.

5. *The Small Boys and the She-Bears 2:23 – 25*

²³ He went up from there to Bethel and on his way some small boys ⁶¹⁰ came out of the city of Jericho and made fun of him, saying, “Get out of here, Baldy! Get out of here, Baldy!” ²⁴ He turned and when he saw them he cursed them in the name of the Lord. ⁶¹¹ Two she-bears came out of the forest and mauled forty-two of the boys. ²⁵ From there he went to Mount Carmel and later returned to Samaria.

<CHAPTER 3>

6. *JEHORAM'S Moabite Campaign 3:1 –*

¹ In the eighteenth year of the reign of *Jehoshaphat* the king of Judah JEHORAM, the son of AHAB king of Israel, became king of Israel in Samaria. He ruled for twelve years. ⁶¹² ² He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, yet, unlike his father and mother [he removed the pillar(s) of Ba al that were made by his father]. ⁶¹³ ³ In spite of this he held fast to the sins of JEROBOAM the son of Nebat who lured Israel into sin. He did not depart from this.

⁴ Mesha, king of Moab, ⁶¹⁴ was a sheep breeder who annually paid a tribute to the king of Israel of one hundred thousand lambs and the wool from one hundred thousand rams but when AHAZIAH died before any action could be taken his brother JEHORAM had the responsibility of dealing with the situation. ⁵ When AHAB died the king of Moab rebelled against Israel. ⁶ JEHORAM the king of Israel who ruled from Samaria at that time mustered all of Israel. ⁷ He sent word to *Jehoshaphat* the king of Judah, saying: “The king of Moab has rebelled against me. Would you join me in doing battle against him?” The king of Judah said, “I am as ready as you are. My men and horses are at your disposal.” ⁸ He than added: “What road will we take as we march?” JEHORAM replied, “By the road that leads to the wilderness of Edom. ⁶¹⁵

⁹ The king of Israel and the king of Judah were joined by the king of Edom. After they had made their devious march which already had taken seven days ⁶¹⁶ there was no more water for the army, the cattle or for the pack animals that comprised their baggage

⁶⁰⁸ The modern name for the spring is “Am es Sulran.”

⁶⁰⁹ Literally: “I have thrown salt there. I have healed the water.”

⁶¹⁰ NIV: “youths.”

⁶¹¹ TEV: “he glared at them.” Commentators have tried to make this story acceptable by various explanations but this story does not find favor in the 21st Century. It seems it does not have any moral point of view. In the New Testament it is clear that Christ came to heal, not to destroy.

⁶¹² Some scholars feel he reigned for only eight years. There is a question about some of the dating concerning him in the Hebrew Scriptures as compared with other records.

⁶¹³ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation. In Hebrew the word is “pillar.” In the LXX it is a plural word.

⁶¹⁴ This Moabite king’s name appears on the first line of the Moabite Stone. He owned a huge flock of sheep, These sheep were rather small and did not give a good impression from their appearance but they had an abundance of quality wool. They were not raised specifically for their meat but rather for their wool. Amos the prophet also raised this breed of sheep.

⁶¹⁵ The reference is to the present day Wadi al-Hesa at the southern border of Moab.

⁶¹⁶ They marched around the southern tip of the Dead Sea.

train.⁶¹⁷ 10 Then the king of Israel said, “Alas, the Lord has called these three kings to be given over into the hand of Moab.” 11 *Jehoshaphat* said, “Is there no one here who is a prophet of the Lord of whom we can inquire?” Then one of the servants of the king of Israel said, “Elisha the son of Shaphat who was the personal attendant of the prophet Elijah⁶¹⁸ is here.” 12 *Jehoshaphat* said, “The word of the Lord is with him!” Thus the king of Israel. *Jehoshaphat* [*the king of Judah*] and the king of Edom went to see Elisha.

13 Elisha spoke to the king of Israel, saying: “What do we have to do with each other?⁶¹⁹ Go to the prophets of your father and those of your mother.” The king of Israel answered: “No! It is the Lord who has called these kings to grant them the land of Moab.” 14 Elisha said, “As certainly as the Lord whom I serve lives, and I live, if I did not have respect for *Jehoshaphat* the king of Judah I would not even glance at you. 15 Get me a musician.” When the musician came and played [*on the lyre or harp*]⁶²⁰ the word of the Lord came upon him. 16 He said, “Thus says the Lord: I will make this dry stream full of pools of water⁶²¹ 17 for this is the word of the Lord --- You will see neither wind nor rain but this stream (*or, wadi*) will become filled with water so you will be able to drink, you, your cattle and your pack animals. 18 This is rather incidental in the sight of the Lord for he will give you the power to overthrow Moab. 19 You will raze every fortified city and every major town, and cut down every fruitful tree, stop up the springs of water at their source, and ruin every piece of fruitful land by having everyone throw a rock into that area.”⁶²² 20 The next morning, at about the time when the morning sacrifice was to be made, water flowed from the direction of Moab. This continued until the stream was filled with water.⁶²³

21 Meanwhile when the Moabites heard that the kings were drawing near for battle against them every man who was old enough to bear arms was enlisted,⁶²⁴ from the youngest to the oldest and these were stationed at the frontier. 22 As the day began and the sun shone on the water the water appeared to the Moabites as if it were blood.⁶²⁵ 23 They said, “This is blood. The kings have surely fought amongst themselves and killed one another and their armies have surely fought each other. We will go and loot the encampment.⁶²⁶ 24 When they came to the camp Israel launched an attack, killing many Moabites until they fled before the Israelites who pursued them as they fled.⁶²⁷ 25 Their cities were destroyed and every fertile piece of land was covered with stones. They stopped up every spring and felled every fruitful tree. Only the city of Kir haresheth

⁶¹⁷ The three kings no doubt expected to find water at the border of Edom and Moab and were astonished to find none.

⁶¹⁸ Literally: “who poured water over the hands of Elijah.”

⁶¹⁹ An alternate translation might be: “Why are you concerned about me?”

⁶²⁰ The purpose was to stimulate the prophetic ecstasy. The playing of a stringed instrument seems to have been customary when Elisha made prophecies. Apparently the ecstatic prophetic condition was increased with the hearing of the music.

⁶²¹ The Hebrew is unclear. Possibly it says, “make catch basins in the stream bed.”

⁶²² There is no evidence that Elisha was encouraging a disaster.

⁶²³ The Hebrew is unclear and might say, “until the country was well watered.”

⁶²⁴ The Hebrew is uncertain. Literally: “from all those old enough to gird on a sword.”

⁶²⁵ The redness of the cliffs which rose 2000 feet above the water level and possible seepage of red soil gave the strange reflection in the early morning light. Edom means “red.”

⁶²⁶ By doing this the Moabites gave up an almost impregnable position.

⁶²⁷ The Hebrew does not clearly state the pursuit but the LXX does.

remained and the slingers ⁶²⁸ surrounded the city, attacking and conquering. ²⁶ When the king of Moab saw that his troops were losing the battle he took seven hundred soldiers as bodyguards, armed with swords, and tried to escape to the king of Edom⁶²⁹ but they failed. ²⁷ He then took his oldest son who was to be his successor as king and sacrificed him on the wall as a burnt offering. There was bitter indignation against Israel and the kings struck camp and returned to their own countries. ⁶³⁰

<CHAPTER 4>

7. Stories about Elisha 4:1 – 6:23

a. The Containers of Oil 4:1 - 7

¹ The wife of one of the men in the school of the prophets came to Elisha, saying, “My husband, ⁶³¹ a participant in the school of the prophets, has died and you are surely aware that he revered the Lord. Now, however, a creditor has come intending to seize my two sons and take them as his slaves.” ⁶³² ² Elisha replied, “What should I be doing for you? Tell me what you have in your house?” She said, “Your maidservant has nothing in the house except a small flask of oil.” ⁶³³ ³ Elisha said, “Go to your neighbors and borrow empty containers (*i.e. bottles, flasks, or bowls*), as many as possible. ⁴ Then go into your house together with your children and shut the door. Pour oil from your flask into these containers and when each one is filled, set it aside.” ⁵ She left Elisha and went in and shut the door with her sons and herself inside, and the sons brought her the containers into which she poured the oil. ⁶ When these containers were filled she said to her son, “Bring me another bottle.” He answered, “There are no more.” Then the oil stopped flowing. ⁷ She came out and told the man of God, and he said, “Go and sell the oil, pay your debts, and you and your sons can live on the additional supply.”

b. The Son of the Woman from Shunem 4:8 – 37

⁸ One day Elisha went to Shunem. ⁶³⁴ A woman of influence (*or, wealth*) who lived there urged him to eat a meal. Thereafter whenever he passed he would stop there to eat. ⁹ She told her husband, “I truly believe this is a holy man of God who continually travels this way. ¹⁰ Let’s make a small room on the roof with walls, ⁶³⁵ having a bed, table, stool and oil lamp so that whenever he comes by he can stay with us.”

¹¹ One day he arrived there ⁶³⁶ and went into that room to rest, ¹² and while he was resting he said to his servant Gehazi, “Call the Shunamite.” When she was called she came and stood in his presence. ¹³ Elisha said to his servant Gehazi, “Tell her ‘You have lavished all this on us but what have we done for you? Would you like to have a word spoken on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army?’” She answered: “I feel at home here (*or, I live among my people*).” ¹⁴ After that Elisha said, “What can be

⁶²⁸ Cf. David and Goliath.

⁶²⁹ The king of Syria is more likely the proper translation of a difficult Hebrew text.

⁶³⁰ The Hebrew in this verse is difficult and is variously translated by different translations.

⁶³¹ The Targum identifies the man as Obadiah, AHAB’s chief steward. He is mentioned in I Kings 11.

Josephus *Antiquities* IX. 4. 2 adds that the money Obadiah had borrowed was used to feed the prophets.

⁶³² The Hebrew law permitted children to be sold as chattels. Exodus 21:7.

⁶³³ The LXX adds: “with which I anoint myself” or “which I will use to anoint myself.”

⁶³⁴ Shunem was about 25 miles north of Samaria.

⁶³⁵ Literally: “an upper chamber with walls.” This would be a permanent structure, nothing temporary. Such a room would have access by an outside stairway.

⁶³⁶ Literally: “Now one day had come when...”

done for her?” Gehazi replied, “Well: ⁶³⁷ she has no son and her husband is old.” ¹⁵ Elisha said, “Call her.” When she appeared in the doorway ¹⁶ he said, “When this time of the season comes around again you will be cuddling a baby boy in your arms.” She responded, “No, my lord. O man of God do not lie to me, your maidservant.” ¹⁷ The woman became pregnant and gave birth to a son at about the time Elisha had said.

¹⁸ When the child had grown he went out to see his father among the reapers. ¹⁹ Suddenly he called to his father, “My head, my head!” His father instructed one of the servants to carry the boy back to his mother. ²⁰ When he had lifted him up and carried the boy back to his mother the boy sat on his mother’s lap ⁶³⁸ until noon, when he died. ²¹ His mother took him upstairs and laid the boy on the bed of the man of God and closed the door as she went out. ²² Then she called to her husband. Saying: “Send me a servant and also a jenny (*or, female donkey*) that I might hurry off to see the man of God and then return.” ²³ He said, “Why do you want to see him today? This is not New Moon or Sabbath.” She said, “Shalom.” ⁶³⁹ ²⁴ Then she saddled the donkey and told her servant, “Urge the beast to hurry. Do not slow down unless I tell you .” ⁶⁴⁰ ²⁵ She set out and came to the man of God who was on Mount Carmel. ⁶⁴¹ When the man of God saw her on the way he said to his servant Gehazi, “Look! There is the Shunamite woman. ²⁶ Run to meet her and ask her ‘Are things well with you? Are things well with your husband and the child?’” Her reply was, “It is well.” ²⁷ When she arrived in the presence of the man of God she clutched his feet. Gehazi stepped forward to push her away but Elisha said, “Let her alone, for she is in bitter distress. The Lord has hidden the circumstances from me ²⁸ Then she said, “Did I ask you for a son? Did I not say, ‘Don’t raise my hopes and then dash them?’” ⁶⁴² ²⁹ The man of God told his servant Gehazi, “Tie up your robe in your belt [*so you can run*], take my staff and go. If anyone greets you, ⁶⁴³ do not greet in return, and if anyone speaks to you do not reply. Lay my staff on the face of the child.” ⁶⁴⁴ ³⁰ Then the mother of the child said, “As certainly as the Lord and you, yourself, are alive, I will not leave you.” The prophet then arose and joined her as they traveled. ³¹ Gehazi had gone ahead and laid the staff on the face of the child but there was no response, no sign of life. ⁶⁴⁵ He therefore returned and met Elisha and the child’s mother along the way and said, “The child did not awaken.”

³² When Elisha arrived at the house he saw the child lying on his bed, dead. ³³ He went in and closing the door he prayed to the Lord. ³⁴ He then crouched over the body of the child, his mouth on the child’s mouth, his eyes looking at the child’s eyes, his hands upon the child’s hands, and stretching himself out over the child, ⁶⁴⁶ the child’s flesh became warm. ³⁵ Then he got up and walked to and fro in the house after which he again

⁶³⁷ TAN: “The fact is.”

⁶³⁸ Literally: “knees.”

⁶³⁹ Literally; “peace.” LXX: “Peace. It is well.” CB: “It is for the best.”

⁶⁴⁰ The servant was to run behind the donkey and prod it with a stick if it slowed down. On those occasions, when the donkey refused to hurry the servant was to lead (by pulling on the halter) the donkey on the right path.

⁶⁴¹ The distance was about 25 miles from Shunem to Mount Carmel.

⁶⁴² CEV: “So, I begged you not to get my hopes up, and I didn’t even ask you for a son.”

⁶⁴³ LXX: “blesses you.”

⁶⁴⁴ The command to hurry and not be detained was so that the effectiveness and power of the staff would not diminish. The prophet was trying to send his power by means of his staff.

⁶⁴⁵ Literally: “no attentiveness.”

⁶⁴⁶ NEB: “he pressed upon him.”

stretched himself out over the child. The child sneezed seven times ⁶⁴⁷ and opened his eyes. ³⁶ He summoned Gehazi and said, “Call the Shunamite.” Gehazi called her and when she came he said, “Pick up your child.” ³⁷ She came and knelt at his feet, bowing to the ground. Then she took her son and went out.

c. Death in the Pot 4:38 – 41

³⁸ Elisha came to Gilgal when there was a famine in the land. The prophetic students were sitting before him and he told his servant, “Get out the large pot and prepare some stew for these prophets.” ³⁹ One of them went out into the field ⁶⁴⁸ to gather herbs and found a wild vine and from it gathered the skirt of his robe filled with wild gourds. ⁶⁴⁹ and cut them up and put them into the stew, being unaware of what they were. ⁶⁵⁰ ⁴⁰ The stew was poured out so everyone could eat but while they were eating the stew they cried out, “O man of God, there is death in the pot.” They would not eat it. ⁴¹ He said, “Bring me some flour.” He threw the flour into the pot and said, “Pour out helpings for the men that they might eat.” There was no source of harm in the stew.

d. The Twenty Loaves 4:42 – 44

⁴² A man from Baal-Shalishah, brought the man of God twenty loaves of bread ⁶⁵¹ as the first fruits and some fresh grain in a sack. ⁶⁵² Elisha said, “Give the men that they may eat.” ⁴³ His servant said, “How am I to divide this between one hundred men?” The prophet replied, “Give to the men that they may eat for the Lord says: ‘They will eat and they will have some left.’” ⁴⁴ So he set it before them and they ate and there was some left in accordance with the word of the Lord.

<CHAPTER 5>

e. The Healing of Naaman 5:1 – 19

¹ Naaman, commander of the army ⁶⁵³ of the king of Syria, was esteemed and considered an important man by his master whose high regard for Naaman was based on his having granted a military victory to Syria. He was a valiant warrior but he was also a leper. ⁶⁵⁴ ² In the past, while on a raid the Syrians had captured a young [*Israelite*] girl who became one of the servants of Naaman’s wife. ⁶⁵⁵ ³ The girl told her mistress, “I wish

⁶⁴⁷ This is omitted by the LXX. The LXX has: “the prophet stretched himself on the boy seven times.” A foot note in the NEB has: “and breathed into him” or “and the boy sneezed.”

⁶⁴⁸ Some translators read this as “the woods.”

⁶⁴⁹ The gourds that were picked were perhaps thought to be gourd cucumbers. This plant however is usually identified as ‘colocynth’ which is about the size and appearance of an orange. In small quantities its pulp is not harmful but in large quantities it causes stomach cramps.

⁶⁵⁰ NIV: “though no one knew what they were.”

⁶⁵¹ The LXX adds: “and cakes of figs as the first fruits.” In post-exilic times the priests had the exclusive right to serve the bread of the first fruits.

⁶⁵² The Hebrew is unclear. The word translated as “sack:” is a hapax legomenon. This translation is based on the Vulgate. The Syriac and Targum have “garment.” The Hebrew word “**wlqc**” is unknown. It is possibly an Ugaritic word. Very recent scholarship seems to support it means “stalk” in Ugaritic. BV: “fresh fruit.”

⁶⁵³ LXX: “the captain of the host.”

⁶⁵⁴ The Hebrew word “jana’ath” includes a number of skin diseases. Since there was less knowledge concerning these diseases, their cause and treatment, they were all simply called “leprosy.” It is remarkable that the victories of Naaman of Syria are described in a good light in Hebrew writings. TAN: “a dreaded skin disease.”

⁶⁵⁵ LXX: “The Syrians went out in small military units and took a small girl captive who waited on Naaman’s wife.”

my lord would be enabled to see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure ⁶⁵⁶ his leprosy.” ⁴ Naaman went to the king and told him what the girl from the land of Israel had said. ⁵ The Syrian king said, :”Go at once, and I will send a letter [*of introduction*] to the king of Israel.”

He departed, taking with him ten talents of silver, ⁶⁵⁷ and a thousand shekels of gold ⁶⁵⁸ and ten festal garments. ⁶⁵⁹ ⁶ He brought the letter to the king of Israel. The letter stated: “When this letter reaches you, be assured that I have sent you Naaman, my country’s servant, that you might cure him of leprosy.” ⁷ When the king of Israel read the letter he tore his clothing and said, “Am I God? Do I have the power to kill and to restore life? This man has brought this with the intention that I cure him of leprosy! Don’t you see --- he is trying to pick a fight with me “

⁸ When Elisha, the man of God had learned that the king of Israel had torn his garments he sent a message to the king, “Why have you torn your garments? Permit him to come to me so he can learn that there is a prophet in Israel.” ⁹ Naaman came with horses and chariots in his retinue and halted in front of the door of Elisha’s house. ¹⁰ Elisha then sent out a message by his servant, saying; “Go and wash in the Jordan seven times and your flesh will be restored and you will be clean.” ¹¹ Naaman was angry and left, saying, “I had pictured him coming out to me and standing there, loudly calling on the Lord his God and waving his arms over the affected spot and thereby curing me of my leprosy. ¹² Aren’t Abama ⁶⁶⁰ and Pharpar, ⁶⁶¹ the rivers of Damascus better than the rivers of Israel? Could I not wash ⁶⁶² in them and be clean?” So he turned ⁶⁶³ and left, being enraged. ¹³ His servants came to him and said, “My father, if the prophet of Israel had commanded you to do some difficult task, wouldn’t you have done it? It is much better that he has said you are to wash and you will be clean.” ⁶⁶⁴ ¹⁴ He then went down to the Jordan and immersed himself seven times in accordance with the message of the man of God. His flesh was restored, becoming like the flesh of a child and he was clean.

¹⁵ He then returned to the man of God along with his entire retinue, and stood before him, saying: “Be assured that I now realize that there is no God in all the earth than the God of Israel. Please accept a present ⁶⁶⁵ from your humble servant! ¹⁶ Elisha replied, “Just as certainly as God lives and I am alive, I will not accept any gift “ Naaman urged him to accept but he refused. ¹⁷ Then Naaman said, “Permit me to carry [*back to Syria*] as much earth as two mules can carry. I will no longer offer sacrifices to anyone but the Lord. ¹⁸ However, may the Lord forgive me when I must go to the temple of Rimmon ⁶⁶⁶ with my master, to worship. He leans on my shoulder and I must bow down

⁶⁵⁶ Literally: “drive out” or “exorcise.” The word is an Akkadian root word.

⁶⁵⁷ A talent was 91 pounds (troy).

⁶⁵⁸ A shekel was .364 ounce (troy).

⁶⁵⁹ What Naaman brought was sizable. The festal garments were no doubt grand but the style would be obviously Syrian. This would mean that they were hardly wearable in Israel since Israel and Syria were longstanding enemies.

⁶⁶⁰ The name is sometimes spelled as “Abnama.” This is present day “Nahr Barada”

⁶⁶¹ :Present day “Nahr el Awaj.”

⁶⁶² The LXX adds: “πορευθεις.”

⁶⁶³ TAN: “he stalked off in a rage.”

⁶⁶⁴ BV: “If the prophet had instructed you to do something spectacular would you not have done it?”

⁶⁶⁵ Literally: “blessing.” The Hebrew word “**hkrb**” is an unusual word. It is used in Proverbs 11:25 where it is generally translated as “present” or “gift.”

⁶⁶⁶ The spelling “Ramnan” is also used. This was “the thunder and weather god.”

to Rimmon when he does ⁶⁶⁷. May the Lord forgive me for this action.” ¹⁹ Elisha said, “Go in peace.” ⁶⁶⁸

f. Gehazi the Leper 5:19 - 27

However, when Naaman had gone a short distance ²⁰ Gehazi the attendant of Elisha, the man of God, said, “Hmm! My master has permitted this Naaman from Syria to get away without paying anything [*though he had intended to pay.*] Just as surely as God is alive and I live, I will run after him and get something from him.” ²¹ Gehazi followed Naaman and when Naaman noticed that someone was running to follow him he alighted ⁶⁶⁹ from his chariot and met Gehazi and asked, “Is everything well?” ²² Gehazi said, “All is well. My master sent me to say to you: ‘Two young men who are prophetic students from the hill country of Ephraim just arrived. Please give them a talent of silver ⁶⁷⁰ and two festal garments.’” Naaman urged that Gehazi accept two talents ⁶⁷¹ which were placed in two bags along with the festal garments and two of Naaman’s retinue carried them for Gehazi. ²⁴ When they arrived at the top of the hill (*or, the citadel*) ⁶⁷² Gehazi took the bags from their hands and the servants of Naaman departed. ²⁵ He went in and stood in the presence of his master and Elisha said, “Where have you been, Gehazi? He answered, “Your servant did not go anywhere.” ²⁶ Elisha said, “Didn’t I go with you in spirit when the man turned from his chariot and met you? Was this the time (*or, the opportunity*) to accept money and garments; olive orchards and vineyards; sheep and oxen; male and female slaves? ⁶⁷³ ²⁷ Because of this the leprosy of Naaman will cling to you and to your descendants forever!” Gehazi left Elisha’s presence, a leper, as white as snow.

<CHAPTER 6>

g. The Floating Axe Head 6:1 – 7

¹ The members of the school of the prophets said to Elisha, “Where we live is too crowded (*or, cramped*) ⁶⁷⁴ for us. ² Let us go to the Jordan and have each one of us get a log there, that these might be used in erecting a building to be used as our residence. Elisha answered: “Go.” ³ One of them suggested, “Please join us.” His response was, “I will go with you.” ⁴ So Elisha accompanied them as they went to the Jordan to cut down trees. ⁵ As they were felling trees an axe head ⁶⁷⁵ of one of the workers fell into the water, and he cried out: “Alas, O master! It was borrowed!” ⁶ The man of God said, “Where did it fall?” He was shown where it fell the man of God cut a branch (*or, twig*) and threw it into that spot on the water, which caused the axe head to float. ⁶⁷⁶ ⁵ He said, “Grasp it!” He reached out and took the axe head. ⁶⁷⁷

⁶⁶⁷ LXX; “εν τω προσκυνειν αυτον.”

⁶⁶⁸ Naaman, like many people at that time, thought of gods as being local. He would only be able to worship the God of Israel if he stood on some soil from Israel, that being the God of Israel’s own land.

⁶⁶⁹ Literally: “he fell from his chariot.”

⁶⁷⁰ I.e. ninety one pounds.

⁶⁷¹ I.e. one hundred eighty-two pounds. Literally: “he broke out two talents.”

⁶⁷² Some translators simply transliterate the Hebrew: “Ophel.”

⁶⁷³ Elisha is surely repeating the thoughts that went through Gehazi’s mind as he sought silver from Naaman.

⁶⁷⁴ LXX: “narrow.” JB: “where we live side by side with you is too confined for us.”

⁶⁷⁵ Literally: “is of the iron it fell.”

⁶⁷⁶ NAB: “Elisha cut a stick and threw it into the water and brought the iron to the surface.”

⁶⁷⁷ The supernatural power of the man of God is demonstrated here.

h. Capture of the Syrian Army 6:8 – 23

8 On one of the occasions when the king of Syria (*or, Aram*)⁶⁷⁸ was making war against Israel, he discussed with his officers that they would camp at a specific site, anticipating that this might become an ambush to ease the capture of the Israelites.⁶⁷⁹ 9 The man of God sent word to the king of Israel: “Do not pass the site (*naming the site mentioned by the king of Syria*) for the Syrians are awaiting you to carry out an ambush there.”⁶⁸⁰ 10 The king of Israel avoided the area that was told him by the man of God. In this way the man of God alerted the king to be on guard and this happened on a number of occasions.⁶⁸¹

11 The mind of the king of Syria was greatly perplexed because of this and he summoned his officials and inquired: “Tell me! Who is on the side of the king of Israel and is leaking information to him?”⁶⁸² 12 One of his officials said, “No one, my lord and king. Elisha the prophet who is in Israel reports to the king of Israel all that you say⁶⁸³ in your bed chamber. 13 He said, “Go and find him! I will send troops to seize him.” It was reported to the king of Syria that Elisha was in Dothan.⁶⁸⁴ 14 He sent horses and chariots along with a strong military force. They came at night and surrounded the city.

15 When the man of God’s servant went out in the morning⁶⁸⁵ he discovered that the chariots and the host of the Syrian army had surrounded the city. The servant announced: “We are doomed! What can we do?” 16 Elisha said, “Do not be afraid! Those who are on our side are more than those who are our enemies.” 17 Elisha then prayed, saying: “O Lord, I pray to you, asking that you open the eyes of my servant so that he might see.” The Lord opened the eyes of the servant and he saw, not only on the mountain but surrounding Elisha, there was an army of fiery horses and chariots. 18 When the Syrians advanced toward Elisha he prayed to the Lord, saying: “Strike the people⁶⁸⁶ with blindness.”⁶⁸⁷ Then God struck them with blindness⁶⁸⁸ as a fulfillment of the prayer of Elisha. 19 Elisha spoke to them, saying, “This is not the way you had planned to take. This is not the city. Just follow me and I will take you to the person you seek.”⁶⁸⁹ He then led them to Samaria.

20 Upon entering Samaria Elisha said, “O Lord, open the eyes of these men that they may see.” The Lord opened their eyes that they might see and they discovered that they were in the midst of the city of Samaria. 21 When the king of Israel saw them he asked Elisha, “My Father, should I put them to death?” 22 Elisha replied, “You don’t kill the people you capture who surrender to you in battle! You have not even captured these

⁶⁷⁸ Some translators prefer to use the word “Aram.” This is another name which is used for the country of Syria.

⁶⁷⁹ The last word in the Hebrew text is unclear. Apparently it implies that the Syrians are plotting to ambush the army of Israel.

⁶⁸⁰ LB: 8 “We will mobilize our forces at -- - Inaming the place]. 9 Immediately Elisha warned: ‘Don’t go near --- [naming the place].’” The Syrians apparently had concealed themselves well.

⁶⁸¹ Literally: “more than once or twice.”

⁶⁸² LXX: “προδιδωσιν,” LXX: “Who has betrayed me to the king of Israel?”

⁶⁸³ LXX: “breathe in the closet of your bedchamber.”

⁶⁸⁴ This was about 10 miles from Samaria.

⁶⁸⁵ LXX: “the servant of the man of God was an early riser and went out.”

⁶⁸⁶ LXX: “nations.”

⁶⁸⁷ TAN: “with blinding light.”

⁶⁸⁸ The concept of the Hebrew word is “a most intense blindness.”

⁶⁸⁹ MFT: “the person you are after.”

with sword or bow. It would be better if you fed them bread and water and then let them go back to their officers.”²³ Then the king had a lavish meal prepared so they had sufficient to eat and drink, following which he sent them away that they could return to the Syrian army base. The Syrians ceased to invade Israel again.

i. Siege of Samaria 6:24 – 7:20

1. The City is Reduced to Starvation 6:24 – 31

²⁴ Some time later Benhadad the king of Syria mustered the entire army and advanced against Samaria, and besieged it. ²⁵ There was a great famine in Samaria due to the siege. It was so difficult that even the head of a donkey was sold for eight shekels.⁶⁹⁰ of silver, and a pint of pigeon droppings sold for five shekels of silver.⁶⁹¹

²⁶ The king of Israel was passing by on the wall when a woman called to him, saying: “My lord, O king, help! ²⁷ He said, “If the Lord will not help you, how can you expect me to help you? ⁶⁹² I have no grain nor wine.” ⁶⁹³ ²⁸ Then the king asked, “What is your problem?” She replied, “This woman said to me, ‘Give your son that we might eat him today and tomorrow we will eat my son.’ ²⁸ So we boiled my son and ate him. The next day I said, ‘Give your son that we might eat him,’ but she has hidden her son.” ³⁰ When the king heard what the woman had said, he tore his clothing, and people were able to see as he walked on the wall that he was wearing sackcloth next to his skin. ³¹ He said, “May God do the same to me and even more if I have not cut the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat from his shoulders before the day is over.”⁶⁹⁴

2. Elisha is Not Executed 6:32 – 7:2

³² Elisha was seated in his house along with the civic leaders who were seated with him. The king dispatched a man from his retinue to go to find Elisha but before he arrived Elisha said to the civic leaders: “Do you see how this murderer⁶⁹⁵ has sent someone to take off my head? Look! When the messenger comes shut the door and hold it firmly so he can not forcibly enter.⁶⁹⁶ The murderer will surely follow closely. One can hear his footsteps already.” ³³ Even while he was speaking the king came and said, “This trouble is from the Lord! Why should I wait for the Lord’s help any longer?”

<CHAPTER 7>

¹ Elisha said, “Hear the word of the Lord! The Lord declares: ‘Tomorrow at about this time of day a measure⁶⁹⁷ of fine flour will be sold for a shekel and two measures of barley will be sold for a shekel at the gate of Samaria!’”⁶⁹⁸ ² The personal attendant to the king then said to the man of God: “Even if the Lord himself would open up the

⁶⁹⁰ Slightly less than 24 ounces of silver. The LXX has 50 shekels.

⁶⁹¹ About 15 ounces of silver. Some scholars feel that the Hebrew word translated as “pigeon droppings” is a word used as a popular way of describing wild onions, some nuts and seeds, eatable weeds, etc. Scholars are not agreed on the meaning. There is a record in London that in the famine of 1316 people were reduced to eating pigeon droppings.

⁶⁹² TAN: “Don’t ask me, let the Lord help you.”

⁶⁹³ Literally: “from the threshing floor or from the wine press?”

⁶⁹⁴ The king firmly (but wrongfully) believes that this is Elisha’s fault.

⁶⁹⁵ Literally: “this son of a murder.”

⁶⁹⁶ The LXX has: “forcibly detain him.”

⁶⁹⁷ The Hebrew word is “Seah.” The word is not originally Hebrew but scholars are not in agreement as to its root source. They also differ concerning the size of the ‘measure.’ Bruce Metzger lists it as being almost 1 ¼ bushels. BDB describe it as about 10 quarts. It can be agreed upon that it was a sizable measure for the price that was asked for “a measure of fine flour.”

⁶⁹⁸ The gate of the city was generally the area for an open air market.

windows of heaven that happening would be impossible.” Elisha said, “You will see it, but you will not eat of it.”

3. *The End of the Siege 7:3 – 20*

³ There were four men, all lepers ⁶⁹⁹ at the gate of city. They discussed among themselves: “Why are we just sitting back, awaiting death? ⁴ If we say, ‘Let’s enter the city, because of the famine there that is also where we will die. If we stay out here the result will be the same, death. Let’s go to the camp of the Syrians. If they accept us we will live and if not we will be dead.’” ⁵ They got up and started for the camp of the Syrians just as it was twilight. ⁷⁰⁰ When they came to the edge of the camp of the Syrians, amazingly, there was no one there. ⁶ (The Lord had caused the army of the Syrians to hear the din of a large army of chariots and horses, the sound of a great army so they said to one another, “Be alert! The king of Israel must have mercenaries from the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Egypt ⁷⁰¹ who are coming to attack us. ⁷ The army panicked and fled, leaving behind their tents, possessions, horses and donkeys in the camp as they fled for their lives.) ⁷⁰² ⁸ When the lepers came to the outer limits of the camp they entered a tent and ate and drank. Then they looted the silver, gold and clothing, taking these things to a hiding place and burying them. They then came back, going to a second tent which they also rifled, hiding the possessions.

⁹ They then talked about this and said, “What we are doing is not right! This is a day of good news. If we don’t report this to the royal household punishment will find us!” ¹⁰ So they came to the city gates and called to the gatekeepers (*or, porters*) of the city, telling them, “We went to the camp of the Syrians and there is no one to be seen, nor are there any sounds. All that is there are the tethered horses and the tethered donkeys. The empty tents are just as they were.” ¹¹ Then the gatekeepers (*or, porters*) called out and reported the information to the royal courtiers. ¹² The king rose during the night and said to his courtiers, “I will tell you what the Syrians are plotting against us. They understand that we are hungry. They have gone from their camp to hide themselves in the surrounding area and when we go out they will come out of their hiding places to attack us and to capture the city.” ⁷⁰³ ¹³ One of the courtiers said, “Let someone take the five remaining horses that still are somewhat lively, for the other horses are on the verge of death, and send them out to see what has happened.” ⁷⁰⁴ ¹⁴ The king sent two men who were mounted (*on chariots or on horseback*) ⁷⁰⁵ to investigate and they followed the trail of the fleeing Syrians, ¹⁵ tracking them all the way to the Jordan River. The entire trail of their headlong flight was strewn with clothing and gear (*or, equipment*) that had been flung aside. Then the scouts returned and reported to the king. ⁷⁰⁶

⁶⁹⁹ See footnote 654, II Kings 5:1 concerning leprosy.

⁷⁰⁰ The LXX has “at night.”

⁷⁰¹ Some scholars feel “Egypt” is not correct. “Kings” in the plural form is never used when describing Pharaoh of Egypt. The singular word “king” would be used. There is a country near Cilicia that had the same consonants and is thought to have been more logical since this would involve several countries from the north which could coordinate their attacks, etc. The actual meaning of the word is of no consequence since it was simply the imagination of the Syrian army.

⁷⁰² Cf.: ANET p. 377a.

⁷⁰³ Cf.: ANET p. 256a.

⁷⁰⁴ The Hebrew is very unclear. The impression is that if the five horses lose their lives it won’t be any different from those horses that are in stables in Samaria.

⁷⁰⁵ The Hebrew is hardly understandable.

⁷⁰⁶ Cf.: ANET p. 377a.

¹⁶ The people then went out and looted the camp of the Syrians. Because of this a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel and two measures of barley for a shekel in accordance with the word of the Lord. ¹⁷ The king had appointed his personal attendant to be in charge of guarding the gate. All the people, in their rush to get the food in the camp trampled him in the gate so greatly that he died as the man of God had said when the king ⁷⁰⁷ came down to see him. ¹⁸ (Thus the words of the man of God were fulfilled when he said, “Two measures of barley for a shekel and one measure of fine flour for a shekel will be sold at about this time tomorrow in Samaria.” ¹⁹ The officer who was the king’s personal assistant had answered the man of God, “If the Lord himself would make windows in heaven could something like that actually happen?” The Lord said, “You will see it with your eyes, but you will not eat any of it.” ²⁰ Therefore it happened to him that the people trampled him in the gate. He died, trampled to death by the people at the city gate.) ⁷⁰⁸

<CHAPTER 8>

k. The Woman of Shunem Comes Home 8:1 – 6

¹ Elisha had told the woman whose son had been restored to life, ⁷⁰⁹ “Arise and go wherever is suitable with your ⁷¹⁰ household, and remain there for the Lord has decreed that there will be a famine on this land which will last for seven years. ⁷¹¹ ² The woman therefore did what the word of the man of God had said and, along with her household, went to live in the land of the Philistines for seven years. ³ When the seven years had passed the woman returned from the land of the Philistines and went to appeal ⁷¹² to the king for [*the restitution of*] her house and land. ⁴ Just at that moment the king was speaking with Gehazi the servant of the man of God. He had just said, “Inform me of those great things which Elisha has done.” ⁵ While he was informing the king concerning Elisha’s restoring life to someone who had died the woman and her son who had been restored to life appeared to request the return of her house and land. . Gehazi said, “My lord, O king, this is the very same woman whose son was restored to life by Elisha.” ⁶ The king then asked concerning this and the woman explained it to him. The king then appointed an official ⁷¹³ to be at her disposal, saying, “See to it that her possessions as well as all the revenues of her land in those seven years be restored to her.”

l. Elisha and Hazael 8:7 – 15

⁷ Elisha came to Damascus when Ben-hadad, king of Syria was ill and when Ben-hadad was told, “The man of God has come here,” ⁸ the king said to Hazael, “Take a present and go to the man of God and ask him. saying: ‘Will I recover from this illness?’” ⁹ Hazael went to meet the man of God and took a present with him: from among the best things of Damascus, forty camel loads, ⁷¹⁴ and appeared before him. He said, “Your son

⁷⁰⁷ LXX: “τον αγγελον.” LXX: “The king appointed his special assistant to control the traffic at the gate, but he was knocked down, trampled and killed as the people rushed out.”

⁷⁰⁸ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation. Another possibility is dittography.

⁷⁰⁹ The word in the LXX is the word that would be used to “kindle a fire.”

⁷¹⁰ Literally: “you and you.”

⁷¹¹ TAN adds: “and it already has begun.”

⁷¹² Literally: “cry out.”

⁷¹³ The word in the LXX is “eunuch.” These often were people who served in official capacity.

⁷¹⁴ A camel can comfortably carry a load of 330 pounds. It is possible that a camel can carry 900 pounds. To have forty camel loads seems to be a case of trying to buy the man of God’s good will.

Ben-hadad, king of Syria has sent me to inquire of you: ‘Will I recover from this illness?’”¹⁰ Elisha replied, “Tell him, ‘You will certainly recover.’”⁷¹⁵ However, the Lord has revealed to me that he will certainly die.”¹¹ Elisha looked, motionless, at Hazael and stared at him until Hazael became ashamed, and the man of God left in tears.⁷¹⁶ ¹² Hazael said “Why does my lord weep?” He replied: “Because I know the cruelties that you will commit on the people of the land. You will destroy fortresses by burning them; you will kill young men with the sword; you will dash small children to pieces and you will disembowel women who are pregnant. ¹³ Hazael said, “Do you imagine that I, a mere nobody,⁷¹⁷ will become that powerful?” Elisha answered, “The Lord has revealed a vision to me that you will become the king of Syria.” ¹⁴ Hazael then left and went to his master, Ben-hadad, who said, “What did Elisha tell you?” He said, “He told me that you will assuredly recover.” ¹⁵ The next morning, however, Hazael took some heavy cloth,⁷¹⁸ and having dipped it in water placed it over Ben-hadad’s face, smothering him. Hazael then became the king of Syria.⁷¹⁹

8. Jehoram of Judah 8:16 – 24

¹⁶ In the fifth year of JORAM the son of AHAZ, the king of Israel⁷²⁰ *Jehoram*, the son of *Jehoshaphaat*, king of Judah⁷²¹ began his reign. ¹⁷ He was thirty-two years of age when his reign began and he ruled for eight years in Jerusalem.⁷²² ¹⁸ He lived as did the kings of Israel, as the house of AHAZ had done. He had married a daughter of AHAZ. He did what was evil in the Lord’s sight. ¹⁹ In spite of this, the Lord would not destroy Judah for King David’s sake, for David was the Lord’s servant and he had promised that a lamp would shine to him forever.⁷²³

²⁰ (In his days Edom revolted from paying tribute to Judah and set up a king of its own. ²¹ Then *Jehoram* passed over Zair⁷²⁴ with his chariots and at night he and his chariot commanders attacked the Edomites who had surrounded him. His infantry, however, had fled. ²² This became the reason for Edom’s revolt from the rule of Judah⁷²⁵ to this day. Then Libnah⁷²⁶ began to revolt at the same time.)

²³ The additional acts of *Jehoram* and all he accomplished are recorded in The Chronicles of the Kings of Judah ²⁴ *Jehoram* died (*or, slept with his fathers*) and was buried with his father in the city of David and *Ahaziah*, his son reigned in his stead.

⁷¹⁵ This must have been said ironically.

⁷¹⁶ Elisha apparently fell into some kind of trance in which he saw the horror which Hazael would inflict on Israel. TAN: “He kept his face expressionless for a long time and then wept.” MFT: “his face became rigid with horror, absolute horror. Then he went away in tears.”

⁷¹⁷ Literally: “I who am but a dog.” Hazael feigned humility.

⁷¹⁸ The Hebrew is uncertain. LXX: “a quilt.”

⁷¹⁹ Cf.: ANET p 281a.

⁷²⁰ So: LXX & Syriac. Hebrew: “Jehoshaphat the king of Judah.”

⁷²¹ So: LXX & Syriac.

⁷²² Verses 17 – 22, cf.: II Chronicles 21:5 – 19.

⁷²³ Cf.: I Kings 11:36, footnote 336.

⁷²⁴ The exact location is unknown. There are at least three different possible sites. The most logical is somewhere near the south eastern tip of the Dead Sea.

⁷²⁵ Literally: “from under the hand of Judah.”

⁷²⁶ Libnah was a town located on the border between Philistia and Judah. *Jehoram* was facing rebellion on two sides of his land.

9. Ahaziah of Judah 8:25 – 29

25 In the twelfth year of JORAM, son of AHAB king of Israel, *Ahaziah*, son of *Jehoram*, king of Judah, began to reign. 26 *Ahaziah* was twenty-two years old when he began to reign and he reigned for one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athaliah. She was the grand daughter of OMRI, king of Israel. 27 He (*Amaziah*) also walked after the manner of the house of AHAB and did what was evil in the sight of the Lord following the ways of the house of AHAB for after all, he was the son-in-law of the house of AHAB.

28 He went with JORAM the son of AHAB to attack Hazael the king of Syria at Ramoth-gilead. When the Syrians wounded JORAM 29 King JORAM returned to have his wounds heal in Jezreel. This was a wound which the Syrians had given him at Ramah when he fought against Hazael, king of Syria. *Ahaziah*, the son of *Jehoram*, king of Judah, went to visit JORAM the son of AHAB in Jezreel because of his illness.

<CHAPTER 9>

E. The Revolution of Jehu 9:1 – 10:28

1. Jehu Anointed King 9:1 – 13

1 Elisha the prophet called a son of the prophets and said, “Tuck the hem of your robe into your belt ⁷²⁷ and, taking this flask with you, go to Ramoth-gilead. 2 Upon arrival look for Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, ⁷²⁸ and take him away from his fellow commanders, leading him into an inner room. ⁷²⁹ 3 When you are there with him take the flask and pour its contents on his head and say, ‘Thus says the Lord: ‘I anoint you king of Israel.’ After that you are to open the door and flee without delay.”

4 The young man from the school of the prophets went to Ramoth-gilead. 5 Upon his arrival, there was the commander of the army with his counselors, and he said, “O commander, I have an errand for you.” Jehu said, “To which one of all of us?” ⁷³⁰ He said, “To you, O commander.” 6 Jehu rose and entered the house along with the young man. The young man poured oil from the flask onto the head of Jehu and saying, “Thus says the Lord: ‘I anoint you as king over the people of this land, Israel. 7 [You will destroy ⁷³¹ the house of AHAB, your master, that I may thereby avenge Jezebel for the bloodshed she caused my servants, the prophets, and the bloodshed of all those who were servants of the Lord. 8 The entire house of AHAB will perish, ⁷³² and I will destroy every male ⁷³³ in the house of AHAB regardless of social status ⁷³⁴ in Israel. 9 I will make the house of AHAB like the house of JEROBOAM the son of Nebat, and like the house of BAASHA the son of Ahijah. 10 The dogs will devour Jezebel in the territory ⁷³⁵ of Jezreel and no one will bury her.”] ⁷³⁶ Then he hurriedly opened the door and fled.

⁷²⁷ Literally: “gird up your loins.”

⁷²⁸ The Assyrian inscriptions call him the “son of OMRI,” as does the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III who reigned: 869 – 821 BCE.

⁷²⁹ Literally; “calling him to go.”

⁷³⁰ Literally: “to whom of us all?”

⁷³¹ LXX: “και εξαλεθρευσεις τον οικον.”

⁷³² LXX: :και εκ χειρος.”

⁷³³ The KJV translates literally: “every one that pisseth against the wall.”

⁷³⁴ Literally: “bond or free.” This might mean not only blood relatives but friends who are advisors.

⁷³⁵ This signifies the inherited land which had been handed down within the family for many years.

⁷³⁶ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

11 When JEHU came out the commanders asked, “Is everything well? What did this man-man say to you?” He replied, “You know that type and his talk!”⁷³⁷ 12 They said, “You are lying! Tell us the truth!” He answered: “He said this and that and then he said, ‘I anoint you king over Israel.’”¹³ At that moment they all rose removing their outer garments and placing them on the bare steps⁷³⁸ and having done that they blew the trumpet (*or, ram’s horn*) and proclaimed JEHU to be the king of Israel.

2. Assassination of Two Kings 9:14 – 24

14 This is why JEHU the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi conspired against JORAM. (Now JORAM along with the entire army of Israel had been guarding Ramoth-gilead against Hazael, king of Syria. 15 King JORAM had recently returned to Jezreel to heal a wound which he had sustained in battle against the Syrians when fighting against Hazael, king of Syria.) JEHU said, “If you are on my side --- do not let anyone escape from the city to inform Jezreel.”¹⁶ Then JEHU mounted his chariot and went to Jezreel since JORAM lay there as he was recovering from his wounds, and *Ahaziah* king of Judah had come to visit JORAM.

17 The watchman (*or, sentinel*) was standing on the wall of Jezreel and spied the troop⁷³⁹ led by JEHU as he was coming and the watchman (*or, sentinel*) said, “I see a troop.” JORAM said, “Take a horseman and send him out and have him ask: ‘Is it peace?’”¹⁸ Consequently a rider on horseback was dispatched to meet the troop and he said, “Is it peace?” JEHU said, “What have you to do with peace? Reign in behind me.” The watchman (*or, sentinel*) reported, “The messenger reached them, but he is not coming back.”¹⁹ Then a second rider was dispatched who came to them and said, “The king declares: ‘Is it peace?’” JEHU again answered: “What have you to do with peace? Reign in behind me.”²⁰ The watchman (*or, sentinel*) again reported, “He reached them but he is not coming back. The driving is like the driving of JEHU the son of Nimshi⁷⁴⁰ for he drives wildly.”⁷⁴¹

21 JORAM said: “Prepare the chariots!”⁷⁴² and this was done. Then JORAM, king of Israel, and *Ahaziah*, king of Judah set out on their own chariots, going to meet JEHU at the property of Naboth the Jezreelite. 22 When JORAM saw JEHU he said, “Is it peace?” JEHU replied, “What peace can there be as long as the countless harlotries and sorceries of your mother Jezebel continue?”⁷⁴³ 23 Then JORAM reigned around⁷⁴⁴ and fled, calling out to *Amaziah*, “*Treachery, O Amaziah!*”²⁴ JEHU drew his bow with full strength and shot JORAM between the shoulders⁷⁴⁵ and the arrow went through his heart and he collapsed in

⁷³⁷ NRSV: “you know the sort and how they babble.”

⁷³⁸ The Hebrew is obscure. NEB: “stones of the steps.”

⁷³⁹ LXX: “a cloud of dust.”

⁷⁴⁰ Perhaps JEHU was the grandson. Cf. v. 2.

⁷⁴¹ The Targum reports that Jehu normally drove quietly. Josephus *Antiquities IX. 6. 3.* says “he marched slowly and in good order.” NRSV: “like a maniac.”

⁷⁴² Literally: “yoke up the chariot.”

⁷⁴³ The countless harlotries and sorceries refer to idolatrous conditions in the land. This is a metaphorical way of describing spiritual unfaithfulness in worshiping other gods. It may also be an allusion to sacred prostitution. NEB: “Do you call it peace when your mother Jezebel keeps up her obscene idol worship and maintains her sorceries?” NAB: “fornication and corruption” with a foot note “the worship of foreign gods.”

⁷⁴⁴ Literally: “turned his hand.”

⁷⁴⁵ Literally: “arms.”

his chariot. ⁷⁴⁶ ²⁵ JEHU said to Bidkar who was his aid, “Pick him up and throw him onto the plot of ground that belongs to Naboth the Jezreelite. Surely you remember, when you and I were riding side by side behind his father AHAB, how the Lord made a pronouncement against him; ²⁶ ‘As surely as I saw the blood of Naboth yesterday along with the blood of his sons, says the Lord, I will requite you on this plot of ground.’ Now therefore: Pick him up and throw him on that plot of ground in accordance with the word of the Lord.”

²⁷ When *Ahaziah*, the king of Judah saw this he fled in the direction of Beth-haggan, ⁷⁴⁷ and JEHU pursued him and called out, “Shoot him also,” and they shot him ⁷⁴⁸ while he was in his chariot at the ascent to Gur which is near Ibleam. He fled to Megiddo where he died. ⁷⁴⁹ ²⁸ His servants transported him in a chariot to Jerusalem and buried him in the ancestral tomb with his father in the city of David.

²⁹ [*Ahaziah* had become king in the eleventh year of JORAM, the son of AHAB. *Ahaziah* reigned in Judah.] ⁷⁵⁰

3. *The End of Jezebel 9:30 – 37*

³⁰ When JEHU came to Jezreel Jezebel had learned about his coming and she used kohl ⁷⁵¹ on her eyes; adorned her hair, and then sat in the window. ³¹ As JEHU entered the city-gate she said, “Are you coming in peace, you Zimri, murderer of your master?” ⁷⁵² ³² He looked up to the window and asked: “Who is on my side? Who?” Two or three eunuchs (*or, officials*) looked out at him. ³³ He said, “Throw her down!” They threw her down and some of her blood spattered on the wall and on the horses who trampled on her. ⁷⁵³ ³⁴ He went in and ate and drank and then said, “Attend now to that cursed woman and bury her, for after all she is a king’s daughter.” ³⁵ When they went out to bury her they found only her skull, her feet and hands. ⁷⁵⁴ ³⁶ As they returned and told him, he said, “This is the word of the Lord which he spoke to his servant Elijah the Tishbite. ‘In the territory of Jezreel the dogs will eat the flesh of Jezebel. ³⁷ The corpse of Jezebel will be like dung lying on the field, in the territory of Jezreel and no one will be able to say, ‘This is Jezebel.’”

<CHAPTER 10>

4. *JEHU becomes King of Israel 10:1 – 36*

a. *Massacre of the House of AHAB 10:1 – 14*

¹ AHAB had seventy descendants ⁷⁵⁵ in Samaria, so JEHU wrote a letter and sent it to Samaria, ⁷⁵⁶ to the leadership of the city and to the guardians of the sons of AHAB,

⁷⁴⁶ Cf.: ANET p. 131b.

⁷⁴⁷ Literally: “the garden house.” It may have been the same place as present day “El-gannim.”

⁷⁴⁸ This phrase is omitted in Hebrew but is in the LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate.

⁷⁴⁹ One Mss adds: “επι το αρμα και ηγαγον αυτον.”

⁷⁵⁰ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

⁷⁵¹ Kohl is an antimony sulfate that was used (and is still used in some areas) in the Middle East to make the eyes look larger and more brilliant. Was it her object: 1. To make herself more beautiful? 2. To die in all her beauty? 3. To possibly be alluring to the one who was coming?

⁷⁵² Cf.: I Kings 16:9 ff. She apparently neither gives nor accepts mercy at this point.

⁷⁵³ Cf.: ANET p. 25b.

⁷⁵⁴ TEV: “the bones of her hands and feet.”

⁷⁵⁵ Literally: “sons.” Some scholars feel the number “seventy” was a symbolic number meaning “all.”

⁷⁵⁶ So: LXX, Vulgate and Targum. Literally: “Jezreel.” This could easily be an error in the Hebrew language which is not evident in English.

saying: ² Upon the arrival of this letter, you, who give guidance to your master's sons, have chariots, horses, a fortified city, and an armory, ³ are to select the finest and best of your master's sons and to set him on his father's throne and to engage in war that the one selected might remain on the throne."⁷⁵⁷ ⁴ They were terrified and said, "It is common knowledge that the two kings could not stand before him. How could we stand against him?"⁷⁵⁸ ⁵ It was then that the one who was in charge of the palace and the one who was in charge of the city together with the other leadership, along with the guardians sent a message to JEHU, saying: "We are your servants and we are ready to do your bidding. We will not proclaim anyone else as king and we will do what you decree." ⁶ JEHU then wrote a second letter, saying: "If you are on my side, and if you are ready to obey me, take the heads of your servant's sons (*or, the heads of the sons of AHAB*) and bring them to me tomorrow in Jezreel at this time of the day." [Now the seventy king's sons who were being cared for by the leadership among the people of the city and these were also responsible for their upbringing.]⁷⁵⁹ ⁷ When this letter came they took the king's sons, seventy in number, and beheaded them, placing the heads into baskets and sent them to Jezreel. ⁸ When the messenger arrived he reported, "They have brought the heads of the king's sons." JEHU replied, "Place them in two piles near the entrance to the city, leaving them there until morning." ⁹ In the morning, when he went out he stood and spoke to the people: "You are innocent."⁷⁶⁰ I was the one who conspired against my master and killed him. However: who killed these?"⁷⁶¹ ¹⁰ You must realize that concerning the house of AHAB nothing will take place on the earth other than what the Lord has declared, for the Lord has done exactly what he had told his servant Elijah." ¹¹ In that way JEHU killed all the remainder of the house of AHAB in Jezreel including the powerful supporters, intimate friends and supporting priests. There were no survivors.

¹² Following these events he set out for Samaria. On the way when he was at Beth-eked (*or, the Shepherds shelter*), ¹³ JEHU met relatives of *Ahaziah* king of Judah, and he said, "Who are you?" They answered, "We are relatives of *Azariah* and we are coming to visit ⁷⁶² with the royal princes and the queen mother." ¹⁴ "Capture them alive!" was his response. They were all made captives and were killed and their bodies thrown into the pit at Beth-eked --- forty tow princes --- not a single one was spared.

b. Jehonadab the Rechabite 10:15 - 17

¹⁵ When he left there he met Jehonadab the son of Rechab who was coming to meet him. Having greeted him he said, "Are your views the same as mine? (*or, I think we believe alike*)."⁷⁶³ Jehonadab answered, "It is." JEHU said,⁷⁶⁴ "If it is, give me your hand." So they shook hands and JEHU took him up to be with him in his chariot. ¹⁶ He said, "Join me and see my zeal for the Lord." Thus Jehonadab rode with him in his

⁷⁵⁷ Among the Hebrews there was a reluctance to fight the one who ruled. Cf.: Judges 8:19 – 21.

⁷⁵⁸ TAN: "If two kings could not stand up to him, how can we?" JEHU must have known what sort of people he was dealing with – that they would be putty in his hands.

⁷⁵⁹ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

⁷⁶⁰ Grammatically in Hebrew it can also properly be posed as a question: "Are you innocent?"

⁷⁶¹ JEHU is confident that the people will say he is innocent. He assumes that they will say this was the work of the Lord.

⁷⁶² Literally: "see about their welfare."

⁷⁶³ Literally: "Is it right with your heart as my heart is with your heart?" NEB: "Is your heart in accord with my heart as mine is with yours?"

⁷⁶⁴ So: LXX. This is omitted in Hebrew.

chariot. 17 When they arrived at Samaria JEHU had all the people who still remained in Samaria from the house of AHAB killed and then that house was totally wiped out in accordance with the word of the Lord. when he spoke to Elijah.

c. Massacre of Ba al Worshipers 10:18 – 29

18 Then JEHU assembled all the people and said, “AHAB served Ba al a bit but JEHU will serve him greatly! 19 Call all the prophets of Ba al [*along with all Ba al’s worshipers*] ⁷⁶⁵ and all his priests. Let no one fail to attend for I have a great sacrifice ⁷⁶⁶ to offer to Ba al. Whoever will not attend will forfeit his life!” This was done by JEHU with deliberate cunning ⁷⁶⁷ in order to destroy the worshipers of Ba al. 20 JEHU ordered: “Sacrifice a solemn assembly for Ba al!” Thus this was proclaimed. 21 JEHU sent the message through all of Israel and the worshipers of Ba al came --- to the point that there was no one left among the worshipers who did not come. They all entered the house of Ba al, and the house of Ba al was packed with worshipers from one end to the other. 33 He asked the man in charge of the wardrobe ⁷⁶⁸ to bring out the vestments for the worshipers. ⁷⁶⁹ Consequently he brought out the vestments for them. 23 Then JEHU went into the house of Ba al with Jehonadab, the son of Rechab, and said to those who came to worship, “Search and make certain that there are no worshipers of the Lord here in your midst but that there are only worshipers of Ba al.” 24 Then he ⁷⁷⁰ offered the sacrifices and burnt offerings.

JEHU had ordered eighty men to be outside the house of Ba al and said, “The man who allows any of the Ba al worshipers to escape will forfeit his own life! “ 25 As soon as the sacrifices and burnt offerings had been made JEHU gave orders to the guards and to their officers: “Go inside and kill them! Do not let a single person escape!” So the guards and their officers entered and killed them with their swords and threw the bodies outside. They then entered into the inner room ⁷⁷¹ of the house of Ba al. 26 They brought out the stele (*or, pillar*) ⁷⁷² that was in the house of Ba al and burned it. 27 They demolished the stele (*or, pillar*) of Ba al ⁷⁷³ and demolished the house of Ba al, making it into a latrine as is still the case today (*i.e. at the time of the writing of this passage*).

28 It was in this manner that JEHU wiped out Ba al from Israel.

d. Summary of JEHU’s Reign 10:29 – 31

29 JEHU did not turn aside from the sons of JEROBOAM, the son of Nebat, by which he made Israel to sin. The golden calves were in Bethel and Dan. 30 The Lord said to JEHU “ Because you have done well in carrying out what is right in my eyes, and what

⁷⁶⁵ This phrase is only found in the LXX, not in Hebrew.

⁷⁶⁶ The Hebrew word “**xkz**” means “to slaughter” or “to sacrifice.” This is possibly grim humor.

⁷⁶⁷ TAN: “JEHU was acting with guile in order to exterminate the worshipers of Ba al.” NIV: “acted despicably.”

⁷⁶⁸ The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain.

⁷⁶⁹ The word might mean “ministers” instead of “worshipers.” From the time of Genesis 35:2 it was the custom to wash one’s clothes and to wear special clothes. This was a widespread custom in the Middle East.

⁷⁷⁰ So: LXX. Hebrew: “they.”

⁷⁷¹ This is based on the versions. Hebrew has “city.” This might be a reference to an inner citadel in the house of Ba al worship.

⁷⁷² This was a “sacred post” which would be carved with figures of Ba al. Cf.: Deuteronomy 17:3.

⁷⁷³ Some scholars emend this to read “the altar” though there is no hint of manuscript support. This verse seems to be dittography though it is very possible that there would be a wooden stele and one made of stone, since in this verse the word “demolish” is used whereas in the previous verse “burn” is used.

you have done to the house of AHAB in accordance with what was in my heart, your sons will reign to the fourth generation and will be seated on the throne of Israel. ³¹ JEHU however was not careful in his desire to walk in accord with the laws of the Lord the God of Israel with his heart for he did not turn from the sins of JEROBOAM that caused Israel to sin.

e. Israel's Losses to Syria 10:32 – 33

³² In those days the Lord began to dismember (*or, reduce the size of*) the land of Israel. Hazael, the king of Syria defeated them throughout the land of Israel. ³³ This was especially the case from the Jordan eastward: all the land of Gilead, the land of the Gadites, that of the Reubenites, and the Manassites from Aroer which is near the Wadi (*or. Valley of*) Arnon, which is: Gilead and Bashan. ⁷⁷⁴

f. Conclusion 10:34 – 36

³⁴ The rest of the deeds of JOAB and all his accomplishments, his might and leadership are all recorded in the book of The Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. ³⁵ JEHU died (*or, slept with his fathers*) and was buried in Samaria. JEHOAHAZ, his son, reigned in his stead. ⁷⁷⁵ ³⁶ The time that JEHU reigned over Israel in Samaria was twenty-eight years.

<CHAPTER 11>

F. From JEHU'S Revolution to the Fall of the Northern Kingdom 11:1 – 17:10

1. Revolution and Counterrevolution in Judah 11:1 – 20

a. Athaliah Seizes the Throne of Judah 11:1 - 3

¹ When Athaliah the mother of *Ahaziah* saw that her son was dead she moved to destroy all the members of the royal family. ⁷⁷⁶ ² Jehosheba, ⁷⁷⁷ the daughter of King *Joram* and sister of *Ahaziah* took Joash the son of *Ahaziah* ⁷⁷⁸ from among the royal princes who were to be killed, and secreted him along with his nurse in a bedchamber ⁷⁷⁹ that was well hidden from Athaliah, so he would not be killed. ⁷⁸⁰ ³ He remained with her for six years, hidden in the house of the Lord, while *Athaliah* reigned over the land.

b. Overthrow of Athaliah 11:4 – 20

⁴ In the seventh year Jehoiada sent for and brought together the captains of the Carites ⁷⁸¹ and had them assemble in the house of the Lord where he made a covenant with them (*or, exacted an oath from them in the house of the Lord*) at which time he showed them the king's son. ⁵ He commanded them: "This is what you are to do! One third of you, those who come off duty on the Sabbath will be guards of the royal palace; ⁶ (another third will guard at the gate of Sur, ⁷⁸² and another third at the gate behind the

⁷⁷⁴ This area was located in Trans-jordan, present day Jordan. At the time of Joshua three tribes wanted to settle east of the Jordan and were permitted to do so provided that they assisted in the wars to capture the land west of the Jordan.

⁷⁷⁵ Cf.: ANET p. 282b.

⁷⁷⁶ LXX: "the seed of the kingdom." Athaliah continued in the ways of AHAB for an additional six years, until her death. TAN: "she promptly killed off all those who were of royal stock."

⁷⁷⁷ Jehosheba was the wife of the priest Jehoiada and was a half sister to *Ahaziah* king of Judah.

⁷⁷⁸ LXX: "αδελφου αυτης."

⁷⁷⁹ The Hebrew word seems to mean "a room where beds and mattresses were stored."

⁷⁸⁰ NAB: "But Jehosheba, daughter of king *Joram* and sister of *Amaziah* took Joab, his son, and spirited him away, along with his nurse, from the bedroom where the princes were about to be slain."

⁷⁸¹ The word "captains" denotes their being officers over one hundred men. Carites were mercenaries from Asia Minor who formed the royal bodyguard. Cf.: II Samuel 23:1 – 21.

⁷⁸² This was also known as the "Foundation Gate."

grounds.) You will guard the palace. 7 The two divisions of you which come on duty together will guard the house of the Lord. 8 You will surround the king, each having weapons in hand, and anyone who tries to break through the ranks is to be killed. You will be with the king when he goes out and when he comes in.”

9 The captains did exactly as Jehoiada the priest commanded and each brought his men who were to go off duty on the Sabbath along with those who were to come on duty on the Sabbath, presenting themselves to Jehoiada the priest. 10 The priest provided the captains with the spears and shields that king David had which were in the house of the Lord.⁷⁸³ 11 The guards stood, each with his weapons in his hand, from the south side to the north side of the house of the Lord, around the altar and around the royal palace. 12 He then brought the king’s son and placed the crown on him and gave him the testimony;⁷⁸⁴ and upon proclaiming him king anointed him. Those in attendance clapped their hands and said, “Long live the king!”

13 [When *Athaliah* heard the noise of the guards and the others who were in attendance she went into the house of the Lord to those who were assembled there. 14 When she saw the king standing in the customary spot by the pillar, and the captains,⁷⁸⁵ and the trumpeters beside the king and all the people of the land⁷⁸⁶ who were all rejoicing and blowing trumpets, *Athaliah* tore her clothing and shouted: “Treason! Treason!” 15 Then Jehoiada the priest ordered the top ranking captain of the guard, saying, “Bring her out between the ranks and kill her and anyone who follows her.” (The priest added, “But: don’t kill her within the house of the Lord.”) 16 They laid their hands on her and taking her through the horses’ entrance to the royal palace they killed her there.

17 Jehoiada made a covenant with the Lord, the king, and the people that they would be the Lord’s people. 18 Then all people of the land went to the house of Ba al and tore it down; even the altars and images which were broken into pieces. They also killed Mattan,⁷⁸⁷ the priest of Ba al in front of the altar.]⁷⁸⁸ Jehoiada posted watchmen over the house of the Lord. 19 He took the captains of the Carites, the guard, and all the people of the land, and together they brought the king from the house of the Lord through the Gate of the Guards to the royal palace. The king then was seated on the throne of the kings. 20 Thus all the people of the land rejoiced and the city was quiet after *Athelilah* had been killed by the sword in the area of the royal palace.

2. *Jehoash of Judah 11:21 – 12:21*

21 [H.1] *Jehoash* was seven years old when he began his reign.

⁷⁸³ Cf.: II Chronicles 23:9.

⁷⁸⁴ The Hebrew is unclear. Scholars feel he gave the king the Ten Commandments. Other scholars omit one letter from the Hebrew word and then it would read, “he gave him bracelets.” Cf.: II Samuel 1:10. NRSV: “the covenant.” A foot note reads “treaty” or “testimony.”

⁷⁸⁵ Two ancient translations have “singers.”

⁷⁸⁶ “The people of the land” is a rather technical expression to describe the general populace of the land.

⁷⁸⁷ The full name of the priest of Ba al would be “Mattan-ba al” meaning “the gift of Ba al.” This was a common name for priests of Ba al.

⁷⁸⁸ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

<CHAPTER 12>

1 [H. 2] In the seventh year of JEHU, *Joash*⁷⁸⁹ began to reign, and reigned for forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibiah of Beer-sheba. 2 [H. 3] *Joash* did what was right in the eyes of the Lord as long as he was instructed by Jehoiada⁷⁹⁰ the priest. 3 [H. 4] In spite of this the high places for worship were not removed and people continued to slaughter and sacrifice along with burning incense at these high places.

b. Repair of the Temple 12:4 – 16

4 [H. 5] Joash spoke to the priests, saying, "All the money⁷⁹¹ to be used for holy things which is brought to the house of the Lord as the temple tax; the money which comes from the assessment of people, and the money that people voluntarily contribute to the house of the Lord⁷⁹² 5 [H. 6] is to be received by the priests from acquaintances⁷⁹³ and is to be used to repair the physical damage⁷⁹⁴ of the temple when such damage is discovered."⁰ [H. 7] In the twenty-third year, however, of *Joash's* reign the priests had made no effort and the temple was still in disrepair.⁷⁹⁵ 7 [H. 8] Because of this King Joash summoned Jehoiada the priest and the other priests and said, "Why do you not repair the house of the Lord? From now on take no more money from your acquaintances but see that it is given to repair the house of the Lord."⁸ [H. 9] The priests agreed that they should no longer take any money from the people and that it should be given for the repair of the temple.

9 [H. 10] Then Jehoiada the priest took a chest and drilled a hole in the top and placed it to the right side, in front of the altar.⁷⁹⁶ As one entered the house of the Lord the priests who guarded the threshold would be able to receive the gift and place the money into the chest for the repair of the house of the Lord. 10 [H. 11] Whenever they felt that the chest was filled they summoned the royal secretary and the high priest and they would come up and count it, tie it up the money in bags that were given for the house of the Lord. 11 [H. 12] The money was then weighed out⁷⁹⁷ and given over into the hands of the workers who had oversight of the restoration of the house of the Lord.⁷⁹⁸ The overseers then paid the carpenters and builders who worked on the house of the Lord, 12 [H. 13] and also pay the masons and stonecutters. They also attended to the paying for the supplies: timber, quarried stone, and any additional outlay for the restoration of the house

⁷⁸⁹ In Hebrew the name is spelled "Jehoash." Since there are kings with that name in both Israel and Judah many translators make a differentiation by naming the king of Judah with the alternate spelling, "Joash." This is the practice here for the sake of simple clarity.

⁷⁹⁰ The Hebrew says, "he did what is right all the days of his life." II Chronicles 2 says "while he was tutored by Jehoiada." Joash slipped in his loyalty to God after the death of Jehoiada the priest.

⁷⁹¹ LXX: "all the money for which each man is assessed."

⁷⁹² The Hebrew is unclear. All assessments plus voluntary contributions were being given to the priests. Cf. Leviticus 27:2 – 8. NEB: "The silver for which each man was assessed, the silver of the persons assessed under his name, and any silver which is brought voluntarily to the house of the Lord." NAB: "all the funds for sacred purposes that are brought to the temple of the Lord --- the annual tax --- the personal redemption money, and whatever funds are freely brought to the temple of the Lord."

⁷⁹³ The Hebrew word: "RKM" is used only here and in verse 7. The meaning of the word is uncertain.

⁷⁹⁴ Literally: "breeches."

⁷⁹⁵ MFT: "the priests did not repair any of the dilapidation to be found in the temple."

⁷⁹⁶ This location would have been off limits to the worshippers. LXX Codex A has: "pillars." This supports the location that would be occupied by the priests who guarded the threshold, and would be a reasonable location.

⁷⁹⁷ This took place prior to having coins struck. Pieces of silver were weighed.

⁷⁹⁸ The Hebrew is rather unclear. The above translation is an attempt to translate a questionable text .

of the Lord. ¹³ [H. 14] These funds, however were not used for the making of silver basins. ⁷⁹⁹ snuffers, bowls, trumpets or any other vessels of gold or silver. ⁸⁰⁰ ¹⁴ [H. 15] Those funds were given to the workers in payment for materials and labor on the house of the Lord. ¹⁵ [H. 16] They did not require any accounting for the men who received and distributed these funds, for they were hard working and dealt honestly. ¹⁶ [H. 17] (The money that was received for guilt offerings and sin offerings was not brought to the house of the Lord but went directly to the priests.) ⁸⁰¹

c. Joash's Reverses 12:17 – 18

¹⁷ [H. 18] At that time Hazael, the king of Syria, went up to fight against Gath ⁸⁰² and he captured it. Following that Hazael determined that he would attack Jerusalem. ¹⁸ [H. 19] *Joash*, king of Judah, took all the votive gifts that came from *Jehoshaphat* and from *Jehoram* and *Ahaziah*, his father, the king of Judah, who had dedicated them, along with his own votive gifts along with all the gold found in the house of the Lord and in the royal palace, and sent these to Hazael the king of Syria. Hazael then left Jerusalem.

d. Assassination of Joash 12:19 – 21

¹⁹ [H. 20] The rest of the acts of *Joash* and all his accomplishments are found in the book of The Chronicles of the Kings of Judah. ²⁹ [H. 21] His servants conspired against him and murdered *Joash* at the Milo, ⁸⁰³ on the way that goes down to Silia. ⁸⁰⁴ ²¹ [H. 22] These were Jozacar, the son of Shimeath, and Jehozabad, the son of Shomer, his servants, who struck him, killing him. He was buried with his ancestors in the city of David and *Amaziah*, his son, ruled in his stead. ⁸⁰⁵

<CHAPTER 13>

3. JEHOAHAZ of Israel 13:1 – 9

¹ In the twenty-first year of *Joash*, the son of *Azariah*, king of Judah, JEHOAHAZ, the son of JEHU, began his reign in Israel in Samaria and reigned for seventeen years. ⁸⁰⁶ ² In the eyes of the Lord he persisted in committing sins like those of JEROBOAM, the son of Nebat, who had caused Israel to sin. He did not depart from this. ³ The Lord's anger flamed against Israel, and the Lord periodically gave Israel into the hands of Hazael, king of Syria and into the hands of Ben-hadad, the son of Hazael. ⁴ Then JEHOAHAZ pleaded with the Lord and the Lord listened to him for he saw Israel's oppression because of the affliction of Israel that was caused by the king of Syria. ⁵ Therefore the Lord provided deliverance for Israel and they were able to escape the power of Syria. The people of

⁷⁹⁹ LXX: "silver doors."

⁸⁰⁰ The gold and silver vessels that had been in the building had apparently disappeared possibly as tribute to some neighboring kingdom.

⁸⁰¹ Cf.: Leviticus 5:15. JB: "the money for the expiation of one at fault or of a sin was not given to the temple of Yahweh; that was for the priests."

⁸⁰² This was a Philistine city south and west of Jerusalem.

⁸⁰³ The meaning of "Milo" is questionable but most scholars seem to think it is an area on the east side of the city of Jerusalem where land was filled into enlarge and stabilize that portion of the city and the city wall.

⁸⁰⁴ Were these servants of Joash paid off by Hazael?

⁸⁰⁵ TEV: "*Joash's* officers plotted against him, and two of them, Jahozam the son of Shimenth and Jehozabad, the son of Shaezerm killed him at the house that was built on the land that was filled on the east side of Jerusalem, at the road that goes down to Silia."

⁸⁰⁶ Cf.: ANET p. 282b.

Israel were given freedom from Syria and were able to reside in their homes⁸⁰⁷ as they had done in the past. ⁶ However, they did not forsake the sins of the house of JEROBOAM who had caused Israel to sin but they persisted in their sinfulness,⁸⁰⁸ and kept the Asherah (*or, sacred poles*) as worship locations in Israel. ⁷ All that remained from the army of JEHOAHAZ was fifty horsemen and ten chariots along with ten-thousand infantry, for the army of Israel had been destroyed by the Syrian army, making them as valuable as the dust of the threshing floor.⁸⁰⁹ ⁸ The additional deeds of JEHOAHAZ and his accomplishments are recorded in the book of The Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. ⁹ JEHOAHAZ died (*or, slept with his fathers*) and was buried in Samaria. JEHOASH, his son reigned in his stead.

4. JEHOASH of Israel 13:10 – 25

a. Summary 13:10 - 13

¹⁰ In the thirty-seventh year⁸¹⁰ of *Joash*, king of Judah, the son of *Jehoiakim*, JEHOASH, the son of JEHOAHAZ, began to reign in Samaria and reigned for sixteen years. ¹¹ He also did what was displeasing in the Lord's sight. He continued in the sins of JEROBOAM, the son of Nebat, who had led Israel into sinfulness. ¹² [The additional deeds of JEHOASH and a description of his might as he fought against King *Amaziah* of Judah are all written in the book of The Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. ¹³ JEHOASH died (*or, slept with his fathers*) and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel. His son JEROBOAM II became king.⁸¹¹

b. The Arrow of Victory 13:14 – 19

¹⁴ When Elisha had become ill, with the illness that ultimately resulted in his death, JEHOASH, king of Israel went down to see him and cried, "My Father! My Father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!"⁸¹² ¹⁵ Elisha told the king: "Take a bow and arrow,"⁸¹³ so he did so. ¹⁶ Elisha then said: "Draw the bow," which the king did. At that moment Elisha laid his hand on that of the king. ¹⁷ He said, "Open the window that faces east." When this was done Elisha said, "Shoot!" The king shot and Elisha said, "The Lord's arrow of victory, the arrow of victory over Syria! You will fight Syria at Aphek⁸¹⁴ until they are evicted and their power has waned." ¹⁸ He then said, "Take the arrows," and he took them. Then Elisha said to the king of Israel, "Strike them on the ground." The king struck them on the ground three times. ¹⁹ Then Elisha was angry with the king and said, "You should have struck them five or six times. If you had done that you would have been able to strike Syria until you had overcome it, but now you will only be able to win over Syria three times."

⁸⁰⁷ LXX: "tents."

⁸⁰⁸ So: LXX, Syriac, Targum and Vulgate. Hebrew: "walked in."

⁸⁰⁹ Israel had become a complete and defenseless vassal of Hazael of Syria. Some scholars insert v. 23 here.

⁸¹⁰ Scholars have tried to understand this date but there seems to be no theory that explains the problem that has become generally accepted.

⁸¹¹ This passage is repeated in II Kings 14:15 f. where it is more appropriate.

⁸¹² The king was repeating the words that Elisha had said at the time of the death of Elijah. TEV adds: "You have been a mighty defender of Israel."

⁸¹³ LXX: "weapon."

⁸¹⁴ There are several places known as Aphek. This one seems to be a site in Trans-jordan, on the east side of the Jordan River.

c. The Miracle of Elisha 13:20 – 21

²⁰ Elisha died and they buried him. During this time bands of marauding Moabites invaded, roaming the land in the spring ⁸¹⁵ of the year. ²¹ Just as a man was taken for burial they saw a band of marauding Moabites and they dropped his body into Elisha's grave and at the moment that the man's body touched the bones of Elisha he stood, erect, on his feet.

d. Turning the Tide 13:22 – 25

²² Hazael, king of Syria greatly oppressed Israel during the entire reign of JEHOAHAZ. ²³ The Lord, however, had compassion on them and cared for them because of his concern for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and would not permit Israel to be destroyed and he did not turn his back on them.

²⁴ When Hazael, the king of Syria died his son Ben-hadad became king in his stead. ²⁵ JEHOASH, the son of JEHOAHAZ regained the cities which had been taken from his father JEHOAHAZ during wars. In three wars JEHOASH was able to defeat him and regain the cities that had been taken. ⁸¹⁶

<CHAPTER 14>

5. Amaziah of Judah 14:1 – 22

a. Introduction 14:1 - 4

¹ In the second year of JOASH, ⁸¹⁷ the son of JOAHAZ of Israel that *Amaziah* the son of *Joash* the king of Judah began to reign in Judah. ⁸¹⁸ ² JOASH was twenty-five years old ⁸¹⁹ when he began to reign and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. ³ He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and sought to imitate his father in every way. ⁴ The shrines in the high places were not removed ⁸²⁰ and people sacrificed and burned incense at these shrines.

b. Amaziah's Clemency 14:5 – 6

⁵ As soon as *Amaziah's* power over the nation was established he had the courtiers (*or, officers*) who had assassinated his father killed with the sword; ⁶ but he did not kill the children of the assassins for it is written in the book (*or, teachings*) of Moses: "The fathers will not be put to death for the children's sins and the children will not be put to death for their father's sins." ⁸²¹

⁸¹⁵ To roam the land in the spring is not the usual thing. Fall, after the last harvest, was a good time for "the season of war." The enemy could not only wage war but also take the harvest that had been stored by the people who had been invaded.

⁸¹⁶ Victory in Israel did not come until after the death of Hazael. The new king had not yet mastered the art of warfare.

⁸¹⁷ In Hebrew the spelling of the name appears in two forms: "JEHOASH" or "JOASH." He should not be confused with *Joash* who was king in Judah.

⁸¹⁸ Some scholars place verses 1 – 7 after verse 16.

⁸¹⁹ Scholars question this age when comparing it with 15:1. LXX: "A son of twenty-five years in the beginning."

⁸²⁰ LXX: "εξηρον."

⁸²¹ Cf.: Deuteronomy 24:16. The writer must have considered this as an admirable example of conduct.

c. Amaziah's Victory over Edom 14:7

⁷ *Amaziah* killed ten-thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt, ⁸²² and captured the city of Sela ⁸²³ by sudden attack and renamed it Joktheel which is still its name at the time of this writing.

d. Amaziah Challenges JEHOASH 14:8 – 14

⁸ *Amaziah* sent ambassadors to JEHOASH, the son of JEHOAHAZ, the son of JEHU, king of Israel. saying: “Let us confront one another in battle!” ⁸²⁴ ⁹ JEHOASH, king of Israel sent his response to *Amaziah*, king of Judah, saying; “A thistle ⁸²⁵ in Lebanon said to a cedar tree in Lebanon, ‘Give your daughter to my son, as his bride.’ A wild animal from Lebanon stepped on the thistle, trampling it down. ⁹ Just because you defeated Edom you have become arrogant, you ought to be content to gloat ⁸²⁶ over that victory. Do not provoke trouble which will drag down Judah and yourself.” ⁸²⁷

¹¹ *Amaziah* did not pay attention to the words of JEHOASH, the king of Israel, so JEHOASH advanced his army against Judah, confronting the army of Judah by invading Judah and engaging in battle at Beth-shemesh. ¹² Judah was routed by Israel and all the army fled, rushing home. ¹³ JEHOASH, king of Israel captured *Amaziah*, king of Judah, the son of *Jehoash*, the son of *Ahaziah* at Beth-shemesh and then attacked Jerusalem and made a breach in the wall of Jerusalem that extended six hundred feet from the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate. ¹⁴ He seized as loot all the gold and silver and all the vessels found in the house of the Lord along with all the treasures in the royal palace and additionally took many hostages when he returned to Samaria.

e. The Death of JEHOASH 14:15 – 16

¹⁵ The additional acts of JEHOASH, his accomplishments and might, along with how he made war against *Amaziah*, king of Judah are all recorded in The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel ¹⁶ JEHOASH died (*or, slept with his fathers*) and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel. His son, JEROBOAM (II) then became the king of Israel.

f. The Death of Amaziah 14:17 – 22

¹⁷ *Amaziah*, the son of *Joash*, king of Judah died fifteen years after the death of JEHOASH, the son of JEHOAHAZ, king of Israel. ¹⁸ A record of the additional deeds of *Amaziah* are to be found in The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah. ¹⁹ A conspiracy was made when he was in Lachish and the conspirators killed him there. ²⁰ They brought his body home on a horse and he was buried with his ancestors in Jerusalem, the city of David. ²¹ All of the populace accepted *Azariah* (*or, Uzziah*) ⁸²⁸ as their new king He was sixteen years old when he was crowned to be king in place of his

⁸²² This is a valley south of the Dead Sea.

⁸²³ Sela is known as Petra which is located in a deep canyon with the buildings hewn out of the sides of the canyon. It is sometimes called “the Rose Rock City of Petra” which is located in present day Jordan.

⁸²⁴ Literally: “Let us meet one another face to face!”

⁸²⁵ NASB: “a thorn bush.”

⁸²⁶ LXX: “glorify yourself sitting in your house.”

⁸²⁷ JB: “why challenge disaster to your own ruin and that of Judah?”

⁸²⁸ In some places where *Azariah* is mentioned his name is written as ‘*Uzziah*.’ In chapter 15 both names are used. In II Chronicles *Uzziah* is used, as is also the case in Isaiah. For the purpose of clarity the name *Uzziah* will be used from now on even though in Hebrew it might be *Azariah*.

father *Amaziah*.²² It was he who rebuilt the city of Elath,⁸²⁹ and restored it to Judah. Thereafter the king died (*or, slept with his fathers*).⁸³⁰

g. JEROBOAM (II) of Israel 14:23 – 24

²³ In the fifteenth year of *Amaziah* the son of *Joash*, king of Judah, JEROBOAM(II) the son of JOASH, king of Israel, began to reign in Samaria, and he reigned forty-one years. ²⁴ He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and did not give up the evils which were established by his ancestor JEROBOAM, the son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin. ²⁵ He restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath along the entire way to Arabah,⁸³¹ doing this in accordance with the word of the Lord when he had spoken to his prophetic servant Jonah,⁸³² the son of Amittai who was from Gath-he-pher. ²⁶ The Lord saw the bitter plight⁸³³ of Israel for the land was stripped and desolate and there was no one to help out: neither slave or free, in the land of Israel.⁸³⁴ ²⁷ The Lord had declared that he would not blot out the name of Israel from under the heavens, so he saved them through JEROBOAM (II), the son of JOASH.

²⁸ The additional acts of JEROBOAM (II) and all his accomplishments and how he recovered Damascus and Hamath which had been lost when he besieged Judah are all recorded in The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. ²⁹ JEROBOAM (II) died (*or, slept with his fathers*) and was buried with the kings of Israel. His son, ZECHARIAH, succeed him as king.

<CHAPTER 15>

7 Uzziah of Judah 15:1 – 7

¹ In the twenty-seventh year⁸³⁵ of JEROBOAM (II), *Uzziah*, the son of *Amaziah*, king of Judah began to reign. ² He was sixteen years old when he began to reign⁸³⁶ and he reigned for fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecoliah of Jerusalem. ³ He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, following the example set by his father, *Amaziah*.⁸³⁷ ⁴ In spite of this the shrines in the high places were not removed. The people still sacrificed and burned incense at these high places. ⁵ The Lord plagued⁸³⁸ the king, for he became leprous and remained so until the time of his death.⁸³⁹ He lived in a separate⁸⁴⁰ house. *Jotham* the king's son acted as regent for the remainder of his

⁸²⁹ This is located at the tip of the north-west arm of the Red Sea. It was the area in which King Solomon's mines were located. Today it is a popular resort area.

⁸³⁰ Verse 22 seems to be out of context and should be included in the words about the king's reign and not connected with the word of his death and burial.

⁸³¹ This is assumed to be the Dead Sea but seems quite far from the traditional territory of Israel.

⁸³² This is assumed to be the prophet whose book bears his name.

⁸³³ Hebrew: "rebellious suffering."

⁸³⁴ Cf.: I Kings 14:10

⁸³⁵ Based on chapter 14 the 15th year would seem to be correct. Scholars have not agreed on the date based on this chapter.

⁸³⁶ LXX: "the son of sixteen years at his reigning."

⁸³⁷ Cf.: II Chronicles 26:3 – 4.

⁸³⁸ LXX: "touched."

⁸³⁹ TAN: "The Lord struck the king with a plague, and he was a leper until the day of his death." TEV: "The Lord struck Uzziah with a dreaded skin disease that stayed with him the rest of his life." The Hebrew word simply describes a skin problem which might be psoriasis, eczema, ring worm, leprosy or some other chronic skin disease.

⁸⁴⁰ LXX: "αφφουσωθ." The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain. TAN: "in isolated quarters." Cf.: II Chronicles 26:16 – 21.

father's life. ⁸⁴¹ 6 The rest of the accomplishments of King *Uzziah* are recorded in The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah. 7 *Uzziah* died (*or, slept with his fathers*) and he was buried with his ancestors in the City of David and he was followed by his son *Jotham* as the king of Judah.

8. *ZECHARIAH of Israel 15:8 – 12*

8 In the thirty-eighth year of *Uzziah*, king of Judah, *ZECHARIAH*, the son of *JEROBOAM* (II) became king of Israel, reigning briefly from Samaria, his reign being only six months. 9 He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, just as his father had done, and he did not depart from the example of *JEROBOAM*, the son of *Nebat*, but followed his sinfulness. 10 *SHALLUM*, the son of *Jabesh*, formed a conspiracy against *ZECHARIAH* and assassinated him at *Ibleum* ⁸⁴² and thus usurped the throne. 11 A report of the deeds of *ZECHARIAH* is recorded in The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. ⁸⁴³ 12 (This was the promise of the Lord which had been spoken to *JEHU*: “Your sons will be seated on the throne of Israel through the fourth generation. That is how it will be!”) ⁸⁴⁴

9. *SHALLUM of Israel 15:13 – 15*

13 *SHALLUM*, the son of *Jabesh*, began to reign in the thirty-ninth year of *Uzziah*, king of Judah, and he reigned in Samaria for one month. 14 Then *MENAHEM*, the son of *Gad*, came up from *Tirzah* to Samaria and attacked *SHALLUM*, the son of *Jabesh*, in Samaria, killing him, thereby usurped the throne. 15 All the other acts of *SHALLUM* and the conspiracy he had made are recorded in The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.

10. *MENAHEM of Israel 15:16 – 22*

16 At that time *MENAHEM* sacked *Tappuah* ⁸⁴⁵ and all who were in the city and the territory of *Tirzah* because they did not surrender to him, this caused him to sack the region and to disembowel all the women who were pregnant.

17 In the thirty-ninth year of *Uzziah*, king of Judah, *MENAHEM*, the son of *Gad*, began his reign over Israel and reigned for ten years in Samaria. ⁸⁴⁶ 18 He did what was evil in the eyes of the Lord, never departing from his sinfulness during his lifetime, ⁸⁴⁷ and following the example of *JEROBOAM*, the son of *Nebat*, who taught Israel to sin. 19 *Pul*, (*also known as Tiglath-Pileser III*) ⁸⁴⁸ was ready to begin a war by invading Israel but *MENAHEM* gave *Pul* a thousand talents of silver ⁸⁴⁹ that he might help him establish *MENAHEM*'S might in the land. ⁸⁵⁰ 20 *MENAHEM* exacted the money from all men who were

⁸⁴¹ NEB: “his son was comptroller of the household and regent.” NASB: “The king's son was over the household and judging the people of the land.”

⁸⁴² The Hebrew is uncertain. It can be translated as a proper noun, as above, or it can be translated as “in the presence of the people.” Cf.: 9:27.

⁸⁴³ Cf.: 10:30.

⁸⁴⁴ In the year 747 BCE two kings were assassinated in Israel and four kings sat on the throne. In the remaining 23 years of the kingdom of Israel there were six kings, five of which seized the throne by means of violence. This was clearly a period of anarchy in Israel. Cf. Amos 8:2.

⁸⁴⁵ So: LXX. The Hebrew is uncertain. The word is “*tiphshah*.” TAN: “mustered from *Tirzah* *MENAHEM* subdued *Tiphshah*.”

⁸⁴⁶ Cf.: ANET p. 283a.

⁸⁴⁷ LXX: “*ημεραις*.”

⁸⁴⁸ *Tiglath-Pileser III* (745 – 727 BCE) adopted the name “*Pul*” when he conquered *Babylon* in 729 BCE.

⁸⁴⁹ A talent weighed 91 pounds.

⁸⁵⁰ Cf.: ANET p. 272c.

wealthy and people of rank: -- fifty shekels ⁸⁵¹ -- from each, which was given to the king of Assyria who then withdrew his army without occupying the land. ²¹ The rest of the information concerning MENAHEM'S deeds are to be found in The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. ²² MENAHEM died (*or, slept with his fathers*) and PEKAHIAH, his son became king.

11. PEKAHIAH of Israel 15:23 – 26

²³ In the fiftieth year of *Uzziah*, king of Judah, PEKAHIAH, the son of MENAHEM, began his reign in Israel, reigning for two years. ²⁴ He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and followed the example of JEROBOAM, the son of Nebat, who directed Israel into sinfulness. ²⁵ [*His aide*] PEKAH, the son of Remaliah, his equerry, ⁸⁵² together with fifty men from Gilead conspired against PEKAHIAH killing him in Samaria within the citadel of the royal palace. ⁸⁵³ ²⁶ The rest of the deeds of PEKAHIAH, and all that he did are written in The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.

12. PEKAH of Israel 15:27 - 31

²⁷ In the fifty-second year of *Uzziah*, king of Judah, PEKAH, the son of Remaliah, began as the king of Israel, reigning in Samaria, and reigned for twenty years. ²⁸ He did what was evil before the Lord and also did not depart from the evils of JEROBOAM, the son of Nebat, who led Israel to sinfulness.

²⁹ During the reign of PEKAH, king of Israel, Tiglath-Pilezer, king of Assyria, invaded and captured Jonoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, and Galilee along with all of the land of Naphtali and took many of the people to Assyria as captives. ⁸⁵⁴ ³⁰ Then HOSHEA, the son of Elah conspired against PEKAH, the son of Remaliah, murdering him, and HOSHEA ruled in his stead. This took place in the twentieth year of *Jotham*, son of *Uzziah*. ⁸⁵⁵ ³¹ The additional deeds of PEKAH and all his activities are recorded in The Book of the Chronicles of Israel.

13. Jotham of Judah 15:32 – 38

³² In the second year of PEKAH, the son of Remaliah, the king of Israel, *Jotham*, the son of *Uzziah*, began to reign. ³³ He was twenty-five years old when he began his reign and he reigned for sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok. ³⁴ He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, in accord with all that his father, *Uzziah* had done. ³⁵ In spite of this the shrines on the high places were not removed. The people kept on offering sacrifices and burning incense at these shrines. He built the Upper Gate of the House of the Lord. ⁸⁵⁶ ³⁶ Additional information concerning *Jotham* and all his accomplishments can be found in The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah. ³⁷ (In those days the Lord began to send Rezin, king of Syria and PEKAH, Israel's king, the son of Remaliah against Judah.) ³⁸ *Jotham* died (*or, slept with his fathers*) and was buried with his ancestors in the City of David. *Ahaz* his son then became the king.

⁸⁵¹ Fifty shekels would amount to 18.2 pounds of silver.

⁸⁵² An equerry is the personal attendant to royalty.

⁸⁵³ The Hebrew has two additional words about which scholars debate as to meaning. The discussion has gone on since Jerome translated the Vulgate and has never been resolved. Are the words proper nouns or what might the reference be.

⁸⁵⁴ Cf.: ANET p. 283d. The date is 732 BCE. This marks the onset of the deportation of people and the ultimate downfall of Israel which culminated in 721 BCE.

⁸⁵⁵ Cf.: ANET p. 284a.

⁸⁵⁶ This is perhaps the Upper Gate of Benjamin. Cf. Jeremiah 20:3; II Chronicles 27:1 – 3.

<CHAPTER 16>

14. Ahaz of Judah 16:1 – 20

a. The Reign of Ahaz 16:1 – 4

1 In the seventeenth year of PEKAH, the son of Remaliah, Ahaz,⁸⁵⁷ the son of Jotham, became king of Judah.⁸⁵⁸ 2 Ahaz was twenty years old when he began his reign and he reigned for sixteen years in Jerusalem. He did not do what was found to be pleasing to the Lord as had previously been done by his ancestor David. 3 He followed the ways of the kings of Israel. He even burned his son as an offering,⁸⁵⁹ thereby copying the abhorrent practice of the nations God had dispossessed to establish a homeland for the people of Israel. 4 He also made sacrifices and burned incense at shrines on the high places and under the trees.⁸⁶⁰

b. Syro-Ephramite War 16:5 – 9

5 At this time Rezin, king of Syria and PEKAH, the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, moved their armies with the intent to invade Jerusalem and proceeded to besiege Ahaz but they were unable to subdue Judah. 6 (At that same time the king of Edom⁸⁶¹ regained control of Elath, driving out the Judeans. The Edomites settled there and reside there – even to this day.) 7 Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pilezer, king of Assyria, saying: “I am your servant and as faithful as a son. Please rescue me from the invasion of the kings of Syria and Israel who are besieging me.” 8 Ahaz also sent along the gold that he found in the house of the Lord as well as his own treasures to be presented to the king of Assyria. 9 The Assyrian king responded by marching his troops against Damascus and having conquering it, he took many of it’s inhabitants as captives, removing them to Kir,⁸⁶² and killed Rezin, king of Syria.

c. Ahaz Visit to Damascus and It’s Results 16:10 – 20

10 When King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet with Tiglath-pilezer, the king of Assyria, he saw an altar that was in Damascus. King Ahaz sent Urijah the priest a model and an exact sketch of the altar and urged the immediate construction of a replica⁸⁶³ in accordance with the information King Ahaz had sent to Urijah the priest. 11 Urijah the priest immediately began the construction and the work was completed by the time Ahaz

⁸⁵⁷ In an ancient Assyrian inscription the name is “Ya’u-hazi Jehoahaz.” This would surely have been the king’s entire name.

⁸⁵⁸ If this dating is correct Ahaz was eleven years old when he began his reign. This seems to be highly unlikely.

⁸⁵⁹ Literally: “he made his son pass through fire.” Exodus 13 speaks of the first born belonging to God but the text was abused and mistreated with the sacrifice of first born sons. This was fortunately not common on the part of the Hebrew people but was much more common in the surrounding nations.

⁸⁶⁰ LXX: “trees of the grove of woods.” These shrines on high places and under trees were considered to be places of idol worship and were repugnant to the Lord. They seem never to have been eradicated, thus giving the understanding that there was an a kind of secret worship of idols that continued over the generations within both Israel and Judah.

⁸⁶¹ The MT has “Syria.” This would have been highly improbable and geographically most difficult. Since the name ‘Edom’ appears in the MT later in the sentence, the Hebrew word for “Syria” has been emended to read “Edom.”

⁸⁶² The exact location of “Kir” is uncertain.

⁸⁶³ It is a bit shocking that King Ahaz wanted a new altar in the house of the Lord that was an exact copy of an altar that was used in idolatrous worship. This implies that the god of Tiglath-pilezer was ‘working out’ better than the Lord. It is also surprising that the King of Judah would enter a temple dedicated to an idol. This was strictly forbidden by the Lord through the messages of Moses.

the king of Judah returned from Damascus. ¹² The king saw the altar upon his return to Jerusalem from Damascus and approached the altar, ascending it. ⁸⁶⁴ ¹³ He sacrificed his burnt offering, ⁸⁶⁵ his cereal offering, poured out his drink offering, ⁸⁶⁶ and threw the blood of his peace offering against the altar. ¹⁴ The bronze altar which was in the presence of the Lord was moved from its location at the front of the house (from the place ⁸⁶⁷ between the new altar ⁸⁶⁸ and the house of the Lord and placed north of the altar.) ⁸⁶⁹ ¹⁵ King *Ahaz* commended Urijah the priest, saying: “Burn the sacrifices on the new altar: both morning and the evening cereal offering, and the king’s burnt offering and the burnt offerings, cereal offerings and drink offerings of the people of the land. Additionally, throw the blood of every burnt offering and the other sacrifices on this altar. The bronze altar will be designated for my use in making divinations. ⁸⁷⁰ ¹⁶ Urijah the priest did everything that King *Ahaz* commanded.

¹⁷ King *Ahaz* cut off the frames ⁸⁷¹ of the stands and removed the basins (*or, lavers*) from them. He took the sea off the stand which was made represent oxen and placed it on a stone platform (*or, pediment*).¹⁸ The covered walkway for the Sabbath which had been built between the royal palace and the house of the Lord as an entrance for the king was removed from the house of the Lord because of the king of Assyria. ⁸⁷² ¹⁹ The record of the additional acts of *Ahaz*, and his accomplishments are all recorded in The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah. ²⁰ *Ahaz* died (*or, slept with his fathers*) in the city of David, and *Hezekiah*, his son, became the new ruler.

<CHAPTER 17>

15. *The End of Israel 17:1 – 40*

a. *HOSHEA of Israel 17:1 – 6*

¹ In the twelfth year of King *Ahaz*, king of Judah, HOSHEA, the son of Elah began to rule in Samaria, and he reigned for nine years. ² He did what displeased the Lord, though not as much as earlier kings of Israel had done. ³ Shalmaneser, ⁸⁷³ king of Assyria, moved his armies against HOSHEA, who then submitted to Shalmaneser, becoming his vassal by paying tribute. ⁴ The king of Assyria discovered that HOSHEA was treacherous

⁸⁶⁴ NEB: “mounted the steps.”

⁸⁶⁵ Literally: “offered in smoke” here and in v. 15.

⁸⁶⁶ Cf.: II Chronicles 13:10,

⁸⁶⁷ The LXX could possibly be translated as, “where it was displayed.”

⁸⁶⁸ Literally: “his altar.”

⁸⁶⁹ The Hebrew is uncertain, thus making an accurate translation most difficult.

⁸⁷⁰ The text is questionable. It is translated in various ways by scholars. TAN: “I will decide on the bronze altar.” JB: “so the old altar will be used only for divination.” Another possible translation would be: “offer morning sacrifice.”

⁸⁷¹ LXX: “the borders of the bases.” NIV: “took away the side panels and removed the basins from the movable stands.”

⁸⁷² The MT is very unclear. The LXX is no great help in making the verse clear. CEV: “He took down the special tent that was used for worship on the Sabbath.” TEV: “on account of the king of Assyria he also extended the house of the Lord as a sabbath passage that had been built in the palace of the king.” NAB: “in deference to the king of Assyria he removed from the temple of the Lord the emplacement for the throne, and the outer entrance for the king.”

⁸⁷³ Shalmaneser was the son of Tiglath-pileser and he ruled Assyria 727 – 722 BCE. After Samaria had been captured in 722 BCE the people who were opinion makers or skilled tradesmen were moved to Assyria. That took place in 720 BCE under the reign of Sargon II who usurped the throne.

(for he had sent envoys ⁸⁷⁴ to So, the king of Egypt ⁸⁷⁵ and did not send tribute to the king of Assyria as had been done annually) because of which the king of Assyria held him in custody as a prisoner bound in chains. ⁸⁷⁶ ⁵ Then the king of Assyria invaded the entire land, coming to Samaria, besieging it for three years. ⁶ In the ninth year of HOSHEA'S reign the Assyrian Emperor ⁸⁷⁷ captured Samaria and carried the Israelites back to Assyria, locating them in Halah, Habon, along the river Gozan, and in the cities of Media. ⁸⁷⁸

b. A Homily 17:7 – 23

⁷ This occurred because ⁸⁷⁹ the people of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God who had freed them from the land of Egypt, from under the power of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and because they had revered other gods, ⁸ having followed the religious statutes of the nations, during the time when the Lord had dispossessed them, so the land came to be under the religious customs that were introduced in the country of Israel by the kings of Israel who guided people in new forms of sinfulness. ⁸⁸⁰ ⁹ The people of Israel attempted to sin against the Lord their God in secret ways which were not acceptable to their Lord. They built shrines (*or, high places*) in all the towns, from lonely watchtowers to well established cities. ¹⁰ They set up stele (*or, pillars, obelisks*) for themselves along with altars of worship for the fertility gods, ⁸⁸¹ on every high hill and under every green tree. ¹¹ Incense was burned ⁸⁸² at these shrines just as had been done by the nations that previously had resided there but had been ejected when the people of Israel inherited the land. They did wicked things, ⁸⁸³ provoking the Lord to anger. ¹² They served fetishes of whom the Lord had spoken to them, saying, “You are not to do this!” ¹³ The Lord, however, warned Israel and Judah through the words of prophets and seers, saying: “Turn away from these evil ways and keep my commandments and my teachings in accordance with all the laws that I have commanded you to observe which you received from me through the prophets!” ¹⁴ But the people would not listen to these message bearers and were equally as stubborn as their ancestors had been, refusing to worship the Lord their God. ⁸⁸⁴ ¹⁵ They spurned his laws and the covenant that was made with their ancestors which he had given. They turned to false idols, ⁸⁸⁵ thereby becoming false themselves, imitating the religions of the surrounding nations, of whom their Lord had commanded them that they should not imitate them. ¹⁶ Despite this they made for themselves images of two calves of cast metal and made fertility gods. ⁸⁸⁶ Additionally,

⁸⁷⁴ The LXX manuscripts have numerous variants

⁸⁷⁵ The name of the king is in question. The LXX has “Σηγορ.” NRSV: “King So of Egypt.” NAB: “Sais.” Some scholars feel the Hebrew word translated “So” in the NRSV is an abbreviation of “Osorkon.”

⁸⁷⁶ Cf.: ANET p.p. 284d, 385a.

⁸⁷⁷ The reference is to Sargon II. Cf. footnote 873.

⁸⁷⁸ The cities and region mentioned are all Assyrian.

⁸⁷⁹ LXX Lucian text: “οργη κυριου εκι τον Ισραηλ,”

⁸⁸⁰ The text in the MT makes virtually no sense. The above is an attempt to discover some meaning in the text.

⁸⁸¹ Literally: “Asherim.”

⁸⁸² The Hebrew word: “rjq” is often translated as “sacrificed.”

⁸⁸³ Literally: “dealt with familiar spirits and carved images to provoke the Lord to anger.”

⁸⁸⁴ LXX: “They made their necks harder than those of their ancestors.”

⁸⁸⁵ LXX: “They walked after vanities and became vain.”

⁸⁸⁶ Cf.: footnote 881.

they worshiped the stars (*or, the host of heaven*) as well as worshiping Ba'al.⁸⁸⁷ 17 They sacrificed their sons and daughters as burnt offerings⁸⁸⁸ and used diviners and augurs,⁸⁸⁹ selling themselves to do evil in the eyes of the Lord in order to vex him.⁸⁹⁰ 18 Because of this the Lord became very angry toward Israel, banishing them from his sight. None remained, with the exception of Judah.⁸⁹¹

19 [Judah also did not keep all the commandments of the Lord their God, for it followed the customs which Israel had introduced. 20 The Lord rejected all the descendants of Israel and afflicted⁸⁹² them, giving them over into the hands of those who plundered, thereby casting them out of his sight.]⁸⁹³

21 When he had torn Israel from the house of David they made JEROBOAM the son of Nebat to be their king. JEROBOAM drove Israel away from the Lord, having them disregard obeying the Lord and committing great sin. 22 The people of Israel continually carried out the sins which JEROBOAM had introduced. They did not depart from them 23 until the Lord deported Israel, sending them out of his sight, as had been declared by his servants, the prophets.⁸⁹⁴ It was because of this that Israel was exiled to Assyria until this day (*or, until the time this is being written.*)

c. Origin of the Samaritans 17:24 – 41

24 The king of Assyria brought people from Babylon: from Cuthan, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim,⁸⁹⁵ placing them in the towns of Samaria. They took over Samaria and resided in its Israelite towns. 25 When they began living there they had no regard for the Lord. Therefore the Lord sent lions into their midst which killed some of the people. 26 The king of Assyria was informed: “The nations that were deported by you and resettled in the region of Israel do not understand the worship⁸⁹⁶ of the god of the land. Because of this he has sent lions who have killed some of them because they did not understand how to worship the god of the land.” 27 The king of Assyria then gave an order: “Send one of the priests who had been exiled from the land, letting him return, that he might live there and teach them the law of the god of that land.” 28 Then one of the priests who had been exiled from Samaria was returned, living in Bethel, and it was he who taught the people how to reverence (*or, worship*) the Lord.

29 However, everyone made gods of their own, placing them in the shrines and high places which the Samaritans⁸⁹⁷ had made in the towns that were allotted to them.⁸⁹⁸ 30 The people from Babylon made Succoth-be'noth their god. The people from Cuth made Nergal⁸⁹⁹ their god. The people of Hamath worshiped a female fertility goddess,

⁸⁸⁷ Cf.: ANET p.249d.

⁸⁸⁸ LXX: “made their sons and daughters pass through fire.”

⁸⁸⁹ LXX: “και εποιησαν εραυδ και θεραφειν.”

⁸⁹⁰ TAN: “they practiced augury and divination and gave themselves over to whatever was displeasing to the Lord and vexed him.”

⁸⁹¹ The homily seems to end here and is again taken up in verses 21 – 23.

⁸⁹² LXX: “unsettled them.”

⁸⁹³ NEB: “finally flinging them out of his sight.” Some scholars feel this verse is a later interpolation.

⁸⁹⁴ LXX: “by the hand of his servants the prophets.”

⁸⁹⁵ These communities were near Damascus.

⁸⁹⁶ LXX: “judgment.”

⁸⁹⁷ This is the first mention of “Samaritans.”

⁸⁹⁸ Religious worship was no longer worship dedicated to the Lord, but synergistic worship, using any religious concept that occurred to the worshipers.

⁸⁹⁹ This was a deity of the underworld.

Ashima ⁹⁰⁰ their goddess. ³¹ The people of Avvites had Nibhaz and Tartak as their gods. The people from Sepharvites burned their children as offerings to Adram-melech and Anam-melech, ⁹⁰¹ the gods of Sepharvaim. ³² They also revered the Lord and appointed all sorts of people to be priests who served in the high places and sacrificed on behalf of the people in the shrines where cult worship existed. ³³ While they worshiped the Lord they also served their own deities at the same time, continuing what they had done in the nation from which they had come. ³⁴ They have continued in this manner, as they had done in the past, to this day.

[They do not revere the Lord and are not obedient to the laws and teachings (*or, statutes and ordinances*) which the Lord had commanded to be carried out by the children of Jacob when he established the nation of Israel. ³⁵ The Lord had made a covenant with them and commanded: “You shall not worship other gods or bow yourselves to them, or make sacrifices to them; ³⁶ but you shall revere the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt with the great power of his mighty hand. You will bow yourselves before him and will make sacrifices to him. ³⁷ You will obey the laws and teachings (*or, statutes and ordinances*) along with the commandments which he wrote for you. Be careful! Do this! There is to be no reverence of other gods! ³⁸ You are never to forget the covenant that was made with you and you will not revere other gods. ³⁹ You will revere the Lord your God, and he will deliver you out of the hand of your enemies.” ⁴⁰ However the people would not listen but continued to worship as they had done formerly.] ⁹⁰²

⁴¹ Thus it was that those nations worshiped the Lord while they also served their cast metal idols. Their children and their children’s children continued to do as their ancestors had done and this has continued until this day.

<CHAPTER 18>

IV. *The Surviving Kingdom of Judah 18:1 – 25:30*

A. *The Assyrian Peril 18:1 – 21:26*

1. *Hezekiah of Judah 18:1 – 20:21*

a. *Introduction 18:1 – 3*

¹ In the third year of HOSHEA, ⁹⁰³ the son of Elah, king of Israel, *Hezekiah* ⁹⁰⁴ the son of *Ahaz*, king of Judah began his reign over Judah. ² He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign and he reigned for twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was *Abi* ⁹⁰⁵ the daughter of *Zechariah*. ³ He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord in accordance with the reign of David, his ancestor. ⁹⁰⁶

⁹⁰⁰ This goddess is mentioned in the Elephantine Papyri.

⁹⁰¹ These two gods are mentioned in the Ras Shamra texts.

⁹⁰² Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

⁹⁰³ The dates do not seem to correspond. It is generally agreed that HOSHEA became king of Israel in 725 BCE. This would make the beginning of *Hezekiah’s* reign in the eighth year of HOSHEA’S reign. Scholars feel *Hezekiah* reigned from 716 - 687 BCE.

⁹⁰⁴ *Hezekiah* was known as the great reformer. The unqualified praise of *Hezekiah* is also found for *Josiah*. No other kings of Israel or Judah receive this praise. *Josiah* was the great-grandson of *Hezekiah*.

⁹⁰⁵ This is apparently an abbreviation of “*Abijah*” as found in II Chronicles 29:1.

⁹⁰⁶ Cf.: II Chronicles 29:1 – 3.

b. Hezekiah's Reform and Success in War 18:4–8

⁴ *Hezekiah* destroyed the shrines located in the high places and the pillars [*which were carved as idols*] and utterly destroyed the worship sites of the fertility gods (*or, Asherah*). He shattered the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until that day the people of Israel had burned incense to it. (It was called *Nehushtan*.)⁹⁰⁷ ⁵ He hoped⁹⁰⁸ in the Lord, the God of Israel so greatly that there was no one like him among the kings of Judah, either prior to his reign or following that reign. ⁶ His faith held firmly to the Lord and he did not depart from following the Lord. He kept the commandments which the Lord commanded through Moses. ⁷ The Lord was with him at all times, causing him to prosper. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and would not be subservient to him.⁹⁰⁹ ⁸ He overthrew the Philistines as far as the distant city of Gaza and its surrounding villages, including lonely watchtowers and fortified cities.

c. The Fall of Samaria 18:9–12

⁹ In the fourth year of King *Hezekiah* (that was the seventh year of HOSHEA, king of Israel) Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, marched his army to invade Samaria and besieged the city. ¹⁰ At the end of a three year siege Samaria surrendered to Shalmaneser. In the sixth year of *Hezekiah* (the ninth year of HOSHEA, king of Israel,) Samaria was taken captive. ¹¹ The king of Assyria⁹¹⁰ transported the Israelites from their homeland to Assyria and had them live in Halah, along the Habon, along the river Gazan, and in the cities of the Medes. ¹² [*This occurred*] because they did not listen to the voice of the Lord their God but had transgressed the covenant – even everything which Moses, the servant of the Lord, had commanded. They neither listened nor obeyed!⁹¹¹

d. Sennacharib's Campaign 18:13–19:37

1. The Annalist's Account 18:13–16

¹³ In the fourteenth year of *Hezekiah* Sennacharib, king of Assyria⁹¹² attacked the fortified cities of Judah, conquering them. ¹⁴ *Hezekiah*, king of Judah, sent a message to the king of Assyria who was in the process of besieging Lachish which said, “I have done wrong! Withdraw from my land and you can impose whatever amount you might desire and I will provide it.” The king of Assyria required that *Hezekiah*, king of Judah, provide him with three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.⁹¹³ ¹⁵ *Hezekiah* gave the king of Assyria all the silver that was found in the house of the Lord and in the treasury of the royal palace.⁹¹⁴ ¹⁶ Because of this *Hezekiah* stripped the gold off the doors of the temple of the Lord as well as from the lintels and doorposts which *Hezekiah*, king of Judah had placed on the doors and door frames, giving it to the king of Assyria.⁹¹⁵

⁹⁰⁷ The word order of the MT has been changed. The MT says *Hezekiah* called the bronze serpent “*Nehushtan*.” This perhaps means “the bronze thing.” The word is a combination of two Hebrew words that are very similar: “*nehusheth*” which means “bronze” in Hebrew and “*nahash*” which means “serpent.” Some LXX manuscripts have “the bronze god; the bronze serpent; or the ancient serpent.”

⁹⁰⁸ LXX: “trusted.”

⁹⁰⁹ This revolt by King *Hezekiah* took place at the same time as a revolt by Merodach-baladan of Babylon, who no doubt was the chief instigator.

⁹¹⁰ Sargon II See footnote 873

⁹¹¹ Some scholars insert chapter 20 here.

⁹¹² Sennacharib ruled from 705 – 631 BCE.

⁹¹³ A talent weighted 91 pounds. Cf.: ANET p. 288c.

⁹¹⁴ Cf.: ANET p. 288b.

⁹¹⁵ Many scholars question whether *Hezekiah* did the gold work or whether this was still from the days when Solomon had covered the doors of the temple with gold.

2. The First Story of Hezekiah's Deliverance 18:17 – 19:10

¹⁷ The king of Assyria sent the Tartan, the Rabsaris, and the Rabshakeh ⁹¹⁶ along with a large army from Lachish to King *Hezekiah* in Jerusalem. They came up to Jerusalem and upon arrival they appeared, standing at the conduit of the upper pool, which lay near the highway to the field of those who laundered and bleached cloth. ¹⁸ When they called for the king Eliakim the son of Hilkiah who was the overseer of the royal household; Shebna, the royal secretary and Joah the son of Asaph, the keeper of the royal records came to meet them.

¹⁹ The Rabshakeh spoke. "Tell *Hezekiah* 'His royalty, the king ⁹¹⁷ of Assyria asks: On what do you base your confidence? ⁹¹⁸ ²⁰ Do you think that you have sufficient counsel and strength to engage in warfare? On what do you now rely that you feel you can rebel against me? ²¹ Keep in mind: you are now relying on Egypt. As a staff it is a broken and splintered reed that will jab (*or, pierce*) the hand of anyone who leans on it. That is what Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, is like to anyone who relies on him! ⁹¹⁹ ²² If you say to me, 'We rely on the Lord our God' isn't it he whose shrines and altars *Hezekiah* has removed, saying to the people of Judah and Israel, 'You will only worship before the altar here in Jerusalem'? ²³ Act seriously! Make a wager with my master, the king of Assyria! I will bargain with you! I will give you a thousand horses, if you can find a thousand of your people to ride them! ²⁴ You are no match for even the lowest ranked soldier in the Assyrian army, yet you imagine that you can rely on the Egyptians who will send you chariots and horsemen. ⁹²⁰ ²⁵ Do you think that I will attack and conquer this nation without the Lord's help? The Lord said to me: 'Go against this land and destroy it.'" ⁹²¹

²⁶ Then Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, and Shebna, and Joah said to the Rabshakeh, "Please speak to us in the Aramaic language. We can understand it. Do not speak in the Hebrew language ⁹²² within the hearing of the people who are sitting on the wall." ⁹²³ ²⁷ The Rabshakeh replied: "Has my master sent me to speak these words only to your master and to you and not to those who are sitting on the wall who will be doomed to eat their dung and drink their urine?"

²⁸ Then the Rabshakeh stood and shouted in the Hebrew language: "Hear the word of the king of Assyria: ²⁹ This is the declaration of the king: Do not let yourselves be deceived by the words of *Hezekiah* who tells you that he will be able to deliver you out of the hand of your enemy! ³⁰ Do not let *Hezekiah* make you rely on the Lord by saying: 'The Lord will surely deliver us and this city will not be given over into the hands of the king of Assyria'. ³¹ Do not listen to *Hezekiah* for the king of Assyria declares: Make your

⁹¹⁶ MFT: "the field-marshal, the comptroller, and the staff-commander." These are all titles of Assyrian officials, not names. The exact meaning is uncertain. These were three of the major functionaries of the king of Assyria.

⁹¹⁷ Literally: "great king."

⁹¹⁸ Literally: "your trust."

⁹¹⁹ LXX: "how then will you be able to turn away the face of even one petty officer from among the poorest of my servants? Your personal trust in Egypt provides disaster and horror." Cf.: ANET p. 287d.

⁹²⁰ Cf.: ANET p. 287d.

⁹²¹ Cyrus is said to have said this when he attacked Babylon.

⁹²² Literally: "the language of Judah."

⁹²³ Cf.: ANET p. 238b.

peace with me, ⁹²⁴ surrender to me and then every one of you will eat from your own vineyard and from your own fig tree, and each one of you will be able to drink water from your own cistern. ⁹²⁵ ³² This is the way it will be until I come and bring you to a land that will be yours, a land of grain and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive trees and honey. This is what you will receive! Choose life, not death!

“Do not listen to *Hezekiah* when he misleads you by saying, ‘The Lord will deliver us.’ ³³ Has the god of any of the nations ever delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? ³⁴ Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah? ⁹²⁶ Where are the gods of Samaria? ⁹²⁷ Has Samaria been delivered from the power of my hand? ³⁵ Who among all the gods of these countries has delivered these countries out of my hand? How then will the Lord be able to deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?”

³⁶ The people were all silent for the king had commanded that they not speak, saying, “Do not answer him.” ³⁷ Then Eliakim, the son of Hilkiyah who was the overseer of the royal palace and Shebna, the royal secretary, and Joah, the son of Asaph, the keeper of the royal records came to *Hezekiah* with their clothing torn and reported the message of the Rabshakeh to the king.

<CHAPTER 19>

¹ When King *Hezekiah* heard this he tore his clothing and covered himself with sackcloth. He then went into the house of the Lord. ² He sent Eliakim who was responsible for worship, Shebana, the royal secretary and the senior priests, all wearing sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz. ³ They spoke to him, saying: “This is the message of *Hezekiah*:

“Today is a day of suffering and penitence,
a day of dishonor and disgrace,
for children have reached the moment of birth,
but like a woman whose time to give birth has come,
she no longer has the strength to deliver the child.

⁴ ”Possibly the living God has heard the words of the Rabshakeh who had been sent by his master, the king of Assyria, for the purpose of mocking the living God. Surely the loving God has heard these words and will rebuke these words. Therefore, we pray, lift up a prayer on behalf of the remnant of the people that remain!”

⁵ When the representatives of king *Hezekiah* came to Isaiah, ⁶ Isaiah said to them: “Report to your master: ‘Thus says the Lord – Do not be fearful because of the words you have heard with which the king of Assyria blasphemed and reviled me. ⁷ Be assured that I will put a spirit in him ⁹²⁸ so that when he hears something reported to him he will return to his own land and upon having returned he will be killed with a sword in his own land.’”

⁹²⁴ Literally: “make with no blessing.”

⁹²⁵ LXX: “Gain my favor and come up to me and every man will drink wine from his own vineyard.”

⁹²⁶ These were all Syrian cities that had been conquered by Assyria.

⁹²⁷ So: LXX Lucian and Old Latin.

⁹²⁸ This would be something about which the king of Assyria would have no control.

8 The Rabshakeh returned to the king and found him attacking Libnah for he had heard that the armed forces had left Lachish.⁹²⁹ 9 Then the king heard that it was said of Tirhakah the king of Ethiopia (*or, Cush*)⁹³⁰ “He is set to wage war against you.”⁹³¹

8. *Deliverance of Jerusalem 19:10 – 36*⁹³²

10 The king of Assyria sent messengers to King *Hezekiah* of Judah saying, “Do not let your God on whom you rely deceive you by promising that Jerusalem will not be given over to the power of the king of Assyria. 11 You must realize by now that the king of Assyria has conquered all the other lands. Will you be spared! 12 Did the gods of those other nations have the power to deliver them from among the nations my father had conquered and destroyed: Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people of Eden who were in Telassar. 13 Where is the king of Hamath, of Arphad, the king of the city of Serharvaim, the king of Hena, or the king of Ivvah?”

14 *Hezekiah* received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it. *Hezekiah* then went up to the house of the Lord and unrolled the scroll on which the letter was written before the Lord so it could be read. 15 *Hezekiah* placed the scroll before the Lord and said, “O Lord, the God of Israel, you who are enthroned above⁹³³ the cherubim, you are God, you alone! Among all the kingdoms of the earth, you are the one who made heaven and earth.

16”Be attentive, O Lord, and hear,
open your eyes, O Lord, and see!
Hear the words of Sennacherib
which he has sent to mock the living Lord!

17”It is true, O Lord: the kings of Assyria have exterminated the nations and taken their lands. 18 The gods in which they trusted have been thrown into the fire for they were no gods but merely the work of human hands, fashioned of wood and stone. Therefore they have been destroyed. 19 Now, O Lord, our God, save us! I plead with you – protect us from his hand so all the kingdoms of the earth might know that you, O God, you alone are the true God!”

20 Then Isaiah, the son of Amoz, sent word to *Hezekiah* saying, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel; I have heard your prayer to me about Sennacherib, king of Assyria. 21 This is the oracle that the Lord has spoken concerning him:

“She despises and shames you,
the virgin daughter of Zion,⁹³⁴
she tosses her head behind you,
the daughter of Jerusalem.

22”Whom have you mocked and blasphemed?

⁹²⁹ Cf.: ANET p. 388c.

⁹³⁰ In actuality this was an Egyptian king. The dynasty that was in power at that time was from Upper Egypt, thus giving the name “Ethiopian.” He very likely was Pharaoh Shubatia, the second Pharaoh in the 25th Dynasty.

⁹³¹ This rumor supports the fear implanted in the king of Assyria in verse 7. Some scholars insert 19:36 – 37 here. Cf.: ANET p. 290b.

⁹³² Some scholars feel this entire passage is a later interpolation.

⁹³³ NEB: “on.”

⁹³⁴ This was an expression that was used during the time of Isaiah and Jeremiah concerning Jerusalem and Judah.

Against whom have you spoken
and raised your eyebrows haughtily? ⁹³⁵
Against the Holy One of Israel! ⁹³⁶

23 "Through your envoys you have mocked me – the Lord,
and you have said, 'With my chariots
I have gone up the heights of the mountains,
to the highest peaks of Lebanon.
I felled its tallest cedars, its choicest cypress,
I entered the farthest retreat
and its densest forests. ⁹³⁷

24 I dug wells and drank foreign water
and I dried up the mud with the soles of my feet,
even the streams of Egypt!'

25 "Have you not heard
that I planned that long ago?
I designated in ancient times
that I would certainly have it take place.
that you should turn fortified cities
into heaps of ruin.

26 while their inhabitants, deprived of strength,
are dismayed and confused,
having become like plants in a field,
and like the tender spears of grass
on the housetops; blighted before it matures.

27 "I know when you sit down
and when you rise up –
your coming and going!
I know when you rage against me!
28 It is because you raged against me
that your arrogance has come to my ears.
I will put a hook, and my bit, into your mouth ⁹³⁸
and I will turn you back
the way by which you came.

29 "This will be a sign for you: ⁹³⁹
This year you will eat what had sowed itself,
and in the second year what springs up,

⁹³⁵ CEV: "Sennacherib, you cursed, shouted, and sneered at me, the Holy One of Israel."

⁹³⁶ This is an often used Isaianic expression.

⁹³⁷ This is possibly a reference to the most fertile areas of Lebanon which Sennacherib had conquered.

⁹³⁸ This was how the Assyrians treated their prisoners of war. Now the Lord will treat Sennacherib in the same way.

⁹³⁹ Verses 29 – 31 become a taunt song. Some scholars feel this is a poem. Other scholars feel this is prose.

taking root and bearing fruit;
31 for a remnant will go up out of Jerusalem,
a remnant from Mount Zion,
a band of survivors,⁹⁴⁰ for the zeal of the Lord⁹⁴¹
will be with them.

32 “Because of this the Lord declares to the king of Assyria:

He will not come to the city
nor will an arrow be shot,
nor will enemies confront it with shields,
or build a mound against it.

33 By the way in which he came,
he will also return and will not enter the city,
says the Lord.

34 I will defend the city and save it
for my own sake and for the sake
of my servant David.”

35 On that very night the angel of the Lord caused the death of one hundred eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp and when the survivors woke all they saw was corpses. 36 Then Sennacherib, king of Assyria struck camp and returned to his homeland to live in Nineveh. 37 While he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch,⁹⁴² his god, his sons, Adram-melech and Sharezer, murdered him with swords and then escaped to the land of Ararat.⁹⁴³ His son Esarhaddon succeeded him as king.⁹⁴⁴

<CHAPTER 20>

*c. Hezekiah's Illness 20:1 – 11*⁹⁴⁵

1 In those days *Hezekiah* became ill and was at the point of death. Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, came to him, saying, “Thus says the Lord: ‘Set your affairs⁹⁴⁶ in order for your time has come to die. You will not recover.’” 2 *Hezekiah* then turned his face toward the wall, praying to the Lord, saying: 3 “Remember now, O Lord, I plead with you, remember how I lived my life before you in faithfulness and wholeheartedness, doing what is good in your sight.” *Hezekiah* wailed loudly.⁹⁴⁷ 4 Isaiah left but before he reached the center of the palace grounds the word of the Lord came to him. 5 “Return and

⁹⁴⁰ Literally: “those who escaped.”

⁹⁴¹ MT has “Lord of Hosts.” MFT: “thanks to the jealous care of the Eternal.”

⁹⁴² Nothing is known about a god with this name. Possibly it is “Nusku” who was said to be a personification of fire. It is assumed that the transliteration in the MT was not done carefully.

⁹⁴³ Armenia.

⁹⁴⁴ Esarhaddon reigned over Assyria from 681 to 669 BCE. Cf.: ANET p. 688d. There is no other reference to the death of the Assyrian army. It would hardly have been recorded in the Assyrian records since these only boasted about victories. There is an Egyptian legend about defeating Sennacherib by the Egyptians. Herodotus writes of mice eating the leather straps on the Assyrian shields, making a battle impossible.

⁹⁴⁵ Some scholars place this following 18:12. Scholars question when this took place. Merodach-baladan ruled from 731 to 710 BCE. He was reinstated in 702 BCE.

⁹⁴⁶ Literally: “I command your house.” NEB: “give your last instructions to your household, for you are a dying man.”

⁹⁴⁷ Literally: “in great bitterness.”

tell *Hezekiah* in the presence of the people, ‘This is what the Lord, the God of your ancestor David declares: I have heard your prayer and in three days you will be able to go into the house of the Lord. ⁶ I will add fifteen years to your lifespan. I will deliver you and this city! I will see that you will not be under the power of the king of Assyria for I will defend this city for my own sake as well as for my servant David’s sake.’” ⁷ Isaiah added: “Bring a cake of figs. Let this be laid ⁹⁴⁸ on the boil, like a poultice, ⁹⁴⁹ that he may recover.” ⁹⁵⁰

⁸ *Hezekiah* replied to Isaiah, “What sort of sign will there be to assure me that the Lord will heal me, and that I will be able to go into the house of the Lord on the third day?” ⁹⁵¹ ⁹ Isaiah said, “This is the sign from the Lord that you will be healed as the Lord has promised: Should the shadow go forward ten steps or should it recede?” ⁹⁵² ¹⁰ *Hezekiah* replied, “It is a simple thing for the shadow to go forward ten steps. Preferably have the shadow recede ten steps.” ¹¹ Isaiah the prophet called out to the Lord and the shadow receded ten steps ⁹⁵³ for the sun ⁹⁵⁴ had declined on the sun-dial of Ahaz.

f. The Ambassadors of Merodach-baladan 20:12 – 21

¹² At that time Merodach-baladan, ⁹⁵⁵ the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent envoys bearing letters and gifts to King *Hezekiah*, for he had learned that *Hezekiah* was ill. ¹³ *Hezekiah* welcomed ⁹⁵⁶ them and showed them all his treasures: silver, gold, spices, precious oils (*or, ointments*), the armory, and all that was stored in his storehouses. There was nothing in his palace, storehouses or his realm that he did not show the envoys of Merodach-baladan. ¹⁴ Later Isaiah, the prophet, came to King *Hezekiah* and asked, “What did these men see? Where did they come from?” *Hezekiah*’s reply was, “They have come from a great distance, from Babylon.” ¹⁵ Isaiah’s next question was, “What have they seen in the royal palace?” *Hezekiah* replied, “They have seen everything that was in my house, there is nothing there that they did not see for they even saw my storehouses. I showed them everything.”

¹⁶ Then Isaiah said to *Hezekiah*, “Hear the word of the Lord. ¹⁷ Let it be known that the days are coming when everything that is in the royal palace and everything your ancestors have stored until now will be transported to Babylon! Nothing will remain! This is the word of the Lord. Some of your own sons – those already born and those yet to be born – will be taken away to Babylon and will serve as officers ⁹⁵⁷ in the palace of the king of Babylon.” *Hezekiah* answered Isaiah, “This word of the Lord which you have

⁹⁴⁸ LXX: “και λαβετωαν.”

⁹⁴⁹ To place a poultice of figs on a boil was thought to soften the boil or the ulcer, thus causing it to open so it could drain and heal. There is considerable variety among translators about the Hebrew word which is translated as “boil.” LXX: “eruption.” TAN: “rash.” AB: “the burning infection.”

⁹⁵⁰ LXX: “και υγιδσει.”

⁹⁵¹ Cf.: Isaiah 38:4 – 22 The description there is somewhat clearer.

⁹⁵² NRSV: “advance ten intervals or retreat ten intervals.” Archaeologists have found steps that were specifically built for the purpose of using the shadow as a clock. These step clocks presumably were first built in Egypt.

⁹⁵³ LXX: “και απεστρεφεν η σκια.”

⁹⁵⁴ “The sun” is omitted in the MT. It is found in the Syriac translation. Cf.: Isaiah 38.

⁹⁵⁵ Several manuscripts simply have “Merodach.”

⁹⁵⁶ So: LXX. MT: “listened.” LXX: “was pleased with their coming.”

⁹⁵⁷ Literally: “eunuchs.” The word can mean ‘ranking officers’ or mere “servants.” The word “eunuch” does not necessarily imply making them into physical eunuchs but they serve in some form of official position.

spoken is good.” (*Hezekiah* thought ‘Why not, as long as there is peace and security in my lifetime.’) ⁹⁵⁸

²⁰ The rest of the deeds of *Hezekiah*, his prowess, how he made the pool and the tunnel to bring water into Jerusalem, ⁹⁵⁹ are all recorded in The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah. ²¹ *Hezekiah* died (*or, slept with his fathers*) and *Manasseh*, his son, succeeded him as king. ⁹⁶⁰

<CHAPTER 21>

2. *Manasseh of Judah 21:1 – 18*

¹ *Manasseh* ⁹⁶¹ was twelve years old ⁹⁶² when his reign began and he reigned for fifty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Hephzibah. ² His actions were looked upon by the Lord as evil for he continued the abhorrent practices that the Lord had driven out of the land prior to the people of Israel’s entering the land. ³ He rebuilt the hill shrines which *Hezekiah*, his father had destroyed and he also erected altars to Ba’al and made Asherah ⁹⁶³ as the kings of Israel had done. He also worshiped the host of heaven and served them. ⁹⁶⁴ ⁴ He built altars within the house of the Lord, about which the Lord had said, “In Jerusalem I will put my name.” ⁹⁶⁵ ⁵ He built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts ⁹⁶⁶ of the house of the Lord. ⁶ He also offered his son as a burnt offering ⁹⁶⁷ and practiced soothsaying and augury, and consulted with (*or, brought back*) mediums and wizards. He did a great deal of evil before the Lord, causing the Lord great anger. ⁹⁶⁸ ⁷ [The reconstructed images of the Asherah that he had made were placed in the house (*or, temple*) of which the Lord had spoken to David and his son Solomon: “In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen from all the tribes of Israel, I will place my name forever; ⁸ and I will not cause the people of Israel to leave this land again for I am giving this land to their descendants provided that they will be careful and live in accordance with all ⁹⁶⁹ that I have commanded them and all that Moses commanded them to do.” ⁹ Yet they did not listen, and they were seduced by *Manasseh* to do every evil that all the surrounding nations did – nations that had been driven out of this land by the Lord prior to the arrival of the people of Israel.

⁹⁵⁸ Literally: “there will be safety and faithfulness in my day.”

⁹⁵⁹ See Appendix A. Cf.: II Chronicles 32:30

⁹⁶⁰ Some scholars insert verses 20 – 21 after 19:35.

⁹⁶¹ *Manasseh* ruled longer than any other king of Judah. His reign coincided with the peak of Assyrian prosperity. His reign was in the shadow of Assyrian rule from first to last.

⁹⁶² LXX: “a son of twelve years to his reigning.”

⁹⁶³ These were wooden symbols of a female deity which usually displayed, among other things, sexual organs.

⁹⁶⁴ *Manasseh* reintroduced all but one of the old idolatries his father had destroyed. He did not reintroduce the worship of the bronze serpent.

⁹⁶⁵ Cf.: ANET p. 488c.

⁹⁶⁶ This is not clearly understood by scholars. At that time, it is understood, there was only one court of the temple.

⁹⁶⁷ NEB: “immolated his son by fire.” MFT: “he burned his son alive.” This was no doubt a sacrifice to the god Moloch.

⁹⁶⁸ LXX: “he caused his son to pass through fire, and used divination, augury, and made peculiar places. He increased the number of wizards so as to be evil in the sight of the Lord.” NAB: “reintroduced the consulting of ghosts and spirits.”

⁹⁶⁹ LXX: “κατα πασαν.”

10 The Lord spoke thus through his servants the prophets: 11 “Because *Manasseh*, king of Judah, has done disgusting things, doing things that were even more wicked than those done by the Amorites⁹⁷⁰ who were before them for he caused Judah to sin by his introduction and worship of idols. 12 Therefore the Lord, the God of Israel declares: Be assured that I am bringing evil, the like of which will cause everyone’s ears to tingle, upon Jerusalem and Judah. 13 I will stretch out the measuring line of Samaria over Judah and Jerusalem and the plummet of the house of AHAB;⁹⁷¹ and I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down.⁹⁷² 14 I will hurl the survivors (*or, remnant*) of my heritage, giving them into the hands of their enemies, and they will become prey and a source of spoils to all their enemies. 15 This is because they have done what is evil in my sight and they have provoked my anger, from the time that their ancestors came out of Egypt until this moment.”⁹⁷³

16 *Manasseh* had many innocent people put to death to the extent that the blood of innocent people who were killed flowed on every street in the city of Jerusalem.⁹⁷⁴ and in addition, because of the sin he caused Jerusalem to commit the entire city was guilty of doing evil before the Lord.

17 The other deeds of *Manasseh* and all the sins he committed are all recorded in The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah. 18 *Mannasseh* died (*or, slept with his fathers*) and he was buried in the garden of his house:⁹⁷⁵ in the garden of Uzza; and his son *Amon* became the next ruler.⁹⁷⁶

b. Amon of Judah 21:19 – 26

19 *Amon* was twenty-two years old when he began his reign and he ruled in Jerusalem for two years. His mother’s name was Meshullemeth, the daughter of Haruz, of Jotbah. 20 He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, as had his father *Manasseh*. 21 His way of life was like that of his father, serving idols that his father had worshiped and he continued in that form of worship. 22 He abandoned the Lord, the God of his ancestors and showed no concern for the Lord. 23 The servants (*or, courtiers*) of *Amon* conspired against him and assassinated him in the royal palace. 24 The citizens⁹⁷⁷ killed all those who had conspired against King *Amon*. They then proclaimed *Josiah* king. 25 Additional deeds of *Amon* are all recorded in The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah. 26 He was buried in his tomb in the garden of Uzza, and *Josiah*, his son reigned in his stead.

⁹⁷⁰ This was one of the nations that became dispossessed when the Israelites settled in the land following the exodus.

⁹⁷¹ The line and plummet obviously refer to judgment. Cf.: Amos 7:8.

⁹⁷² Vulgate: “et delens versum et ducam crebrius stylam.”

⁹⁷³ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

⁹⁷⁴ The number of killings in Jerusalem must have increased greatly during the reign of *Manasseh*.

⁹⁷⁵ There is a change of burial place which, in the past was near the Temple, in the royal garden. Cf.: Ezekiel 33:7

⁹⁷⁶ Tradition says that *Manasseh* killed at least one prophet each day. A legend says that he killed the prophet Isaiah by sawing him in half with a wooden saw. That tradition possibly comes from I Kings 18:13.

⁹⁷⁷ Literally: “the people of the land.” JB: “the country people.”

<CHAPTER 22>

B. The End of the Kingdom of Judah 22:1 – 25:30

1. Josiah of Judah 22:1 – 23:30.

a. Introduction 22:1 - 2

¹ Josiah was eight years old ⁹⁷⁸ and he reigned for thirty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah, of Bozkath. ² He did what the Lord approved of and unswervingly followed the pathway that his ancestor David had followed. ⁹⁷⁹

b. Discovery of the Book of the Law

³ In the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign ⁹⁸⁰ the king sent Shaphan, the son of Azaliah, son of Meshullam, the royal secretary, to the house of the Lord, saying: ⁴ "Go up to Hilkiyah, the High Priest, ⁹⁸¹ that he may weigh ⁹⁸² the amount of money that has been brought to the house of the Lord, which the door keepers (*or, warders*) ⁹⁸³ have collected from the people, ⁵ and let it be entrusted ⁹⁸⁴ into the hands of the workmen who have the oversight over the house of the Lord, and let them give it to the builders who are at the house of the Lord, that the house of the Lord might be repaired: ⁶ the carpenters, builders, and masons, as well as for the purchase of timber and quarried stone for the rebuilding of the house. ⁹⁸⁵ ⁷ It will be not be necessary to keep a careful record of the expenditure since these are all honest workers."

⁸ Hilkiyah the High Priest, told Shaphan the royal secretary, "I have found the scroll of the law in the house of the Lord." ⁹⁸⁶ Hilkiyah gave the scroll to Shaphan and he read it. ⁹ Shaphan, the royal secretary, came into the presence of the king to report to the king: "Your servants emptied the money that was found in house ⁹⁸⁷ and have given it over to the person in charge of the workmen who have oversight over the house of the Lord." ¹⁰ Then Shaphan, the royal secretary, reported: "Hilkiyah the High Priest gave me this scroll." Shaphan read it in the presence of the king.

¹¹ When the king heard the words of the scroll he tore his garments. ¹² The king commanded Hilkiyah, the High Priest, Ahikam, the son of Shaphan and Achbor, the son of Miciah, and Shaphan, the royal secretary, along with Asaiah the royal servant, ⁹⁸⁸ saying: ¹³ "Go and inquire of the Lord for me, as well as for all the people --- for all of Judah --- concerning the words that are found on this scroll for if this scroll that has been found is

⁹⁷⁸ LXX: "a son of eight years in his reigning." The reign of Josiah apparently began in 626 BCE, the year in which Ashurbanipal died. Judah had been a vassal of Assyria. Jeremiah 1:13 – 15 speaks of others who also made incursions on Judah.

⁹⁷⁹ Josiah was the second king to be described as following the path of David. Hezekiah was the first to faithfully follow the path set by David.

⁹⁸⁰ The LXX adds: "εν τω μηνι το αγδοω."

⁹⁸¹ This is the first mention of a "high priest." The same word is used in v. 8 and in chapter 23:4.

⁹⁸² The Hebrew is uncertain. Emended it would read: "melt down." The Lucian version of the LXX adds: "και σφραγισον."

⁹⁸³ "Those who guard the entrance." NEB: "those on duty at the entrance."

⁹⁸⁴ LXX: "και δοθητω."

⁹⁸⁵ LXX: "strengthen the breaches."

⁹⁸⁶ TAN: "scroll of the teaching in the house of the Lord." This scroll of the law was the Book of Deuteronomy – that is, at least the nucleus of the present day book of Deuteronomy.

⁹⁸⁷ TAN: "melted down the silver."

⁹⁸⁸ This was surely an important person who gave counsel to the king.

genuine, the wrath of the Lord will be great against us, for neither we nor our ancestors have followed the instructions and thus our sins are great! Determine this scroll's writing concerns us and our way of life."

¹⁴ Hilkiyah, the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan and Asaiah went to Hulda, the prophetess, the wife of Shallum, the son of Tikvah, son of Harhas, the keeper of the wardrobe, (she lived in Jerusalem in the second quarter (*or, the newly established housing area*)) and they called on her. ¹⁵ She told them: "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: 'Tell the man who sent you to me, ¹⁶ The Lord declares: be assured that I will bring evil on this place and on its inhabitants for all the words in this scroll which the king of Judah has read. ¹⁷ Because they have forsaken me and have burned incense to other gods in order that they might provoke me to anger with idols which their hands have made (*or, everything they have done*), therefore my wrath will burn and my anger will not be quenched.' ¹⁸ Now: concerning the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the Lord, this is what you are to say to him: Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Concerning the words which you have heard: ¹⁹ because you were repentant and you humbled yourself before the Lord, when you learned that I would bring evil on this place and on the inhabitants of this land, and they would be desolate and cursed,⁹⁸⁹ and because you have torn your clothing, weeping in my presence, I really have heard you, says the Lord. ²⁰ As a result you can be assured that I will gather you with your ancestors and you will go to your grave in peace and you, personally, will not see the evil which I will bring on this place.'" They brought this word to the king.

<CHAPTER 23>

c. Making a Covenant 23:1 – 3

¹ Then the king summoned all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem and they assembled before him.⁹⁹⁰ ² The king went up to the house of the Lord, accompanied by all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, including priests and prophets from among all the people, people of important rank and those who were laborers, and in their hearing the entire text of the scroll of the covenant was read which had been found in the house of the Lord. ³ The king stood by the pillar⁹⁹¹ and made a covenant to the Lord to live a life which would exemplify that his relationship with the Lord was real; being obedient to his commandments, his testimonies and laws, doing so with all his heart and soul. He would, in his lifetime, fulfill everything that was included in the covenant of this scroll and the people also joined in the acceptance of this covenant.⁹⁹²

d. Reform of Worship 23:4 – 15

⁴ The king commanded Hilkiyah, the High Priest, and the priests who were subject to the High Priest⁹⁹³ and the door keepers (*or, warders*) to remove the cult objects from the temple of the Lord and from the hill shrines that were made for the worship of Ba'al, the Asherah, and for all the host of heaven. These were burned outside the city of Jerusalem in the field⁹⁹⁴ of Kidron and the ashes were carried⁹⁹⁵ to Bethel. ⁵ He

⁹⁸⁹ NAB: "would become objects of loathing and scorn."

⁹⁹⁰ LXX: "to him" or "to his house."

⁹⁹¹ The Targum has "a platform." NEB: "dais."

⁹⁹² Literally: "took a stand in this covenant." The Targum has "and the people entered into a covenant."

⁹⁹³ These were perhaps the 'chief priests' who worked along with the doorkeepers in the cleaning out of things that had accumulated in the temple but were not used in the worship of the Lord.

⁹⁹⁴ The location and meaning of "the field" is unknown.

suppressed all the idolatrous ⁹⁹⁶ places which the king of Judah had designated as places to burn incense: at sites in the cities of Judah and in the area around Jerusalem where incense was burned to Ba'al; to the sun and moon; to the constellations, (*or, to all the host of heaven*). ⁶ The Asherah were taken from the house of the Lord and burned outside the city of Jerusalem, at the brook Kidron. The ashes then were broken into fine pieces and were scattered on the graves of those who had sacrificed to Asherah. ⁹⁹⁷ ⁷ He broke down the cubicles of the cult prostitutes who were in the house of the Lord, (which was near where the women wove hangings for the Asherah). ⁹⁹⁸ ⁸ He brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah and defiled all the high places (*or, altars*) where these priests had burned incense --- from Geba to Beersheba – and he broke down the shrines of the demons (*or, satyrs*) at the front gate, near the entrance gate of Joshua, the governor of the city, and to the left of the gate of the city. ⁹⁹⁹ ⁹ (The priests who conducted worship at the high places or burned their sons or daughters as an offering to Moloch, but did not come to Jerusalem to serve at the altar of the Lord were allowed to join the other priests and eat the unleavened bread.) ¹⁰⁰⁰ ¹⁰ He defiled Tophet ¹⁰⁰¹ which was in the valley of the sons of Hinnom that no one would burn a son or daughter there as an offering to Moloch. ¹¹ He removed the figures of horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun at the entrance ¹⁰⁰² of the house of the Lord, and the chambers of Nathan-melech the chamberlain which were near by. ¹⁰⁰³ (It was in the courtyard, that he burned the chariots of the sun with fire.) ¹² The altar which was located on the roof of the upper chamber of Ahaz ¹⁰⁰⁴ which had been made by the kings of Judah and the altar which *Manasseh* had made in the two courts of the house of the Lord, King *Josiah* also pulled down, ¹⁰⁰⁵ breaking these into small pieces and throwing them into the brook Kidron. ¹³ The king defiled the high places (*or, altars*) located to the east of Jerusalem, to the south of the mount of corruptions ¹⁰⁰⁶ which Solomon the king of Israel had built for worship of the gods of Sidon, the god Chemosh (who was the idol of the Moabites) and Micom, the god of the Ammonites. ¹⁴ He shattered the pillars and cut down the Asherah and desecrated those sites by placing the bones of the dead on those locations.

¹⁵ Moreover at Bethel the high place erected by JEROBOAM the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin included an altar and a shrine which were toppled, broken into stones and then crushed into dust and the Asherah were burned.

⁹⁹⁵ Literally: “carried the curse.” Because of an unusual Hebrew root word the translation is not clear.

⁹⁹⁶ JB: “spurious.”

⁹⁹⁷ Literally: “the common people.”

⁹⁹⁸ The exact meaning of this phrase is not clear. “Hangings” or “robes” are two possible translations.

⁹⁹⁹ The Hebrew is unclear. Some strange root words seem to imply the worship of satyrs at the location of this gate. The exact location is unknown. This verse seems to fit with vs. 21 – 23.

¹⁰⁰⁰ They could eat the food but were not invited into the fellowship of the more loyal priests.

¹⁰⁰¹ This was the location where children were burned as sacrifices.

¹⁰⁰² Literally: “from entering.”

¹⁰⁰³ The Hebrew word is uncertain.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Some scholars feel this is perhaps a gloss.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Literally: “run from there.” Emended it would read: “smashed them there.”

¹⁰⁰⁶ Some scholars feel this is an early name for “The Mount of Olives.” It was known to be a site of shrines since the days of Solomon. I Kings 11:7. LXX:

“και σονετριψεν ταυς λιθυαυ και εδεπτυνεν.”

e. *Josiah and the Book of the Man of God 23:16 – 23*

¹⁶ [As *Josiah* turned he saw tombs on the hillside and he ordered their bones removed and they were to be burned on the altar. This would defile the altar as the word of the Lord just as had been declared by the man of God who had not only announced but also practiced this. ¹⁷ Then he said, “Whose monument is it that I see over there?” The men of the city responded, “It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and predicted all these events dealing with the altar in Israel.” ¹⁰⁰⁷ ¹⁸ *Josiah* said, “Let it stand. Let no one move his bones.” The bones of the prophet then were left and remained in his tomb. (He was the prophet who came to Samaria from Judah.) ¹⁹ All the shrines and high places that were to be found in the city of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had established, were destroyed for they had provoked the Lord’s anger. These were all removed by *Josiah* as were the shrines and high places in the rural areas as well as the cities, including Bethel. ²⁰ He put all the priests who were in charge of shrines and altars to death and had their bones burned before he returned to Jerusalem.] ¹⁰⁰⁸

f. *Celebration of the Passover 23:21 – 23*

²¹ The king issued a command to all the people: “Keep the Passover of the Lord your God, as it is written in The Scroll of the Covenant.” ²² There had not been a Passover like that since the days of the judges who judged Israel, not even during the entire time of the reign of the kings of Israel and Judah. ²³ In the eighteenth year of the reign of *Josiah*, the king of Judah, the Passover was observed in Jerusalem.

g. *Conclusion of the Original Scroll 23:24 - 25*

²⁴ In addition *Josiah* removed the mediums and wizards, ¹⁰⁰⁹ the teraphim ¹⁰¹⁰ and idols and all the abominations that were to be found in the land of Judah and Jerusalem that he might establish the obedience of the words of the Lord which were recorded in the scroll Hilkiyah, the priest, had found in the house of the Lord. ²⁵ Prior to his reign there was no king like him who turned to the Lord whole heartedly, with all his being, seeking to live in accordance with the law of Moses, nor was there any such king after him.

h. *The Death of Josiah 23:26 – 30*

²⁶ The wrath of the Lord, however, did not abate but blazed for it had been kindled by the provocation made by *Manasseh* who had so grievously provoked the Lord. ²⁷ The Lord declared: “I will also remove Judah from my sight as I have removed Israel, and I will reject (*or, throw away*) the city that I had chosen, namely Jerusalem, and the house of which I had said, ‘My name will be there!’”

²⁸ The rest of the acts of *Josiah* and all his accomplishments are recorded in The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah. ²⁹ During his reign Pharaoh Neco, king of Egypt went up to the king of Assyria, ¹⁰¹¹ to the Euphrates River. King *Josiah* went to meet him and Pharaoh Neco killed King *Josiah* when he saw him at Megiddo. ³⁰ His servant carried his corpse in a chariot from Megiddo to Jerusalem and he was buried in

¹⁰⁰⁷ Cf.; I Kings 13:2 – 3.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation. To burn the bones of priests on the altars was a means of permanently defiling the altar so it could never again be used.

¹⁰⁰⁹ TAN: “necromancers and mediums.” Literally: “ghosts and familiar spirits.”

¹⁰¹⁰ Teraphim were household gods. Earlier they were tantamount to being the title to the property. Cf. Genesis 31:32, 34; I Samuel 19:13 – 16.

¹⁰¹¹ This was also known as the Chaldean Empire. Cf.; Isaiah 52:4. Pharaoh Neco had an alliance with the king of Assyria. The Pharaoh’s name was Psamtik, the 2nd Pharaoh of the 25th Dynasty. Other sources list him as a Pharaoh of the 26th Dynasty

his own tomb. The people of the land chose *Josiah's* son *Jehoahaz* as king and anointed him to succeed his father.

2. *Jehoahaz of Judah 23:31 – 35*

³¹ *Jehoahaz* was twenty-three years old ¹⁰¹² when he began to reign and reigned for three months in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutai, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. ³² He did what was evil before the Lord in accordance with all that his ancestors had done. ³³ Pharaoh Neco put him in bronze fetters at Riblah ¹⁰¹³ in the land of Hamath so it would be impossible for him to reign in Jerusalem. He also demanded tribute from Judah in the amount of one hundred talents of silver and one talent of gold. ³⁴ Pharaoh Neco declared *Eliakim* the son of *Josiah* as the king in place of his father, *Josiah* and changed his name to *Jehoiakim*. However, he took *Jehoahaz* to Egypt where he died. ¹⁰¹⁴ ³⁵ *Jehoiakim* gave the silver and the gold to Pharaoh. He accomplished this by taxing the land and demanding money based on the demand of Pharaoh. He took the silver and gold of the land from everyone according to his assessment, to give to Pharaoh Neco.

3. *Jehoiakim of Judah 23:36 – 24:7*

³⁶ *Jehoiakim* was twenty-four years old ¹⁰¹⁵ when he began his reign and he reigned for seven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zebidah, the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah. ³⁷ He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord just as his ancestors had done.

<CHAPTER 24>

¹ During his reign King Nebuchadnezzar ¹⁰¹⁶ of Babylon moved to attack Judah and King *Jehoiakim* became his vassal for three years. Then *Jehoiakim* changed his mind and revolted against Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁰¹⁷ ² The Lord sent a raiding party of Chaldeans and bands of Syrians and Moabites against Judah to destroy it in accordance with the word of the Lord which he spoke through the words of his messengers, the prophets. ³ This took place as an attack against Judah at the command ¹⁰¹⁸ of the Lord, for the Lord intended to banish the people from his sight (*or, presence*) due to the sinfulness of *Manasseh* in spite of all the Lord had done, ⁴ and because of the innocent blood that was shed, ¹⁰¹⁹ (for he drenched Jerusalem with innocent blood) and the Lord would not grant forgiveness (*or, pardon*). ⁵ The rest of the events during the reign of *Jehoiakim* and all he did are recorded in The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah. ⁶ *Jehoiakim* died (*or, slept with his fathers*), ¹⁰²⁰ and his son *Jehoiachin* succeeded him as king. ⁷ The king of Egypt did not move in an aggressive manner since the king of Babylon had seized all the lands that the king of Egypt had conquered, which ranged from the Brook of Egypt to the River Euphrates. ¹⁰²¹

¹⁰¹² LXX: "*Jehoahaz* was a son of twenty-three years at his reigning."

¹⁰¹³ This was an important town in Syria along the Orantes River.

¹⁰¹⁴ Cf.: ANET pp. 294c; 239b. Cf.: II Chronicles 36:4.

¹⁰¹⁵ LXX: "*Jehoiakim* was a son of twenty-four years at his reigning."

¹⁰¹⁶ Nebuchadnezzar reigned in Babylon from 605 to 562 BCE.

¹⁰¹⁷ Some scholars feel verse 7 should be inserted here.

¹⁰¹⁸ Literally: "mouth." LXX: "this was surely in the mind of the Lord."

¹⁰¹⁹ The LXX adds: "in Judah."

¹⁰²⁰ The LXX adds some words from II Chronicles: "and the abominations which he did."

¹⁰²¹ The total weakness of Egypt is described here. After the Battle of Carchemish Egypt was no longer a major power in the Mediterranean world. There was one feeble attempt following this which is mentioned in chapter 25:26. At this time in history the first deportation of citizens from Judah to Babylon took place.

4. *Jehoiachin of Judah 24:8 – 17*

⁸ *Jehoiachin* was eighteen years old when he became king and he reigned for three months in Jerusalem. ¹⁰²² His mother's name was Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. ⁹ He did what was unacceptable in the eyes of the Lord for his life was based on the example of his ancestors. ¹⁰ At this time the army of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, invaded Judah with the intention of beginning a siege against Jerusalem. ¹¹ King Nebuchadnezzar approached the city in person while his army was besieging the city. ¹² *Jehoiachin*, king of Judah surrendered himself to the king of Babylon. Those who offered themselves in this surrender were the king, his mother, his advisors (*or, courtiers*), officials and royal officers. The king of Babylon took these as his prisoners in the eighth year of his reign, ¹⁰²³ ¹³ [and carried off all the treasures from the royal palace and cut the golden vessels which Solomon, the king of Israel, had made, that had been housed in the house of the Lord, ¹⁰²⁴ into pieces, just as the Lord had foretold. ¹⁴ He deported all of Jerusalem, including princes, valiant heroes, ten thousand captives, as well as craftsmen and smiths, --- no one remained other than the poorest inhabitants of the land.] ¹⁰²⁵ ¹⁵ [He also carried away *Jehoiachin* to Babylon as a prisoner, along with his mother, the king's wives, officials and the leading decision makers of the land. These all entered into captivity in Babylon. ¹⁰²⁶ ¹⁶ The king of Babylon brought the captives to Babylon, a total of seven thousand and an additional number of craftsmen, smiths, numbering one thousand in all, each man being physically fit for war.] ¹⁰²⁷ ¹⁷ The king of Babylon appointed Mattaniah, the uncle of *Jehoiachin* ¹⁰²⁸ to become the ruler and changed his name to *Zedekiah*.

6. *Zedekiah, King of Judah 24:18 – 25:7*

¹⁸ *Zedekiah* was twenty-one years old when he took the throne, ¹⁰²⁹ and he reigned for eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. ¹⁹ His actions were unacceptable to the Lord since he followed all that *Jehoiakim* had done. ²⁰ Due to the anger of the Lord it came to the point that Jerusalem and Judah were banished from the Lord's sight. *Zedekiah* rebelled against the king of Babylon.

<CHAPTER 25>

¹ In the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, of *Zedekiah* on the tenth day of the month, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon moved with his entire army against Jerusalem, intending to storm the city. Siege works were built around the entire city. ² The city was under siege until the eleventh year of King *Zedekiah's* reign. ³ On the ninth

¹⁰²² This was an impossible situation in which a young king could establish his reign. It is usually felt that the year was 597 BCE.

¹⁰²³ Jeremiah mentions this as the seventh year of his reign. Some scholars date this as March 16, 697 BCE.

¹⁰²⁴ TAN: "stripped off all the golden decorations of the temple."

¹⁰²⁵ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

¹⁰²⁶ Among those taken as prisoners to Babylon was a young man, Daniel, who later became a prophet.

¹⁰²⁷ These verses are also a possible later interpolation. The figures that are given do not correspond with those in Jeremiah 52:28, 30 which total 4,000.

¹⁰²⁸ This was a full uncle of *Jehoahaz* who went to the land of Egypt with Pharaoh Neco in 608 BCE He was presumably anti-Egyptian because of what the Pharaoh had done to him.

¹⁰²⁹ In spite of opposition *Zedekiah* was able to resist the pro-Egyptian party and gain some strength. Nebuchadnezzar had unwittingly transported the leadership of the country to Babylon and this empowered *Zedekiah* to rule – to a degree.

day, the fourth month, the famine was so severe that there was no food supply for the common people.¹⁰³⁰ ⁴ A breach was made in the city wall¹⁰³¹ and the king, along with all his entire army fled by night by way of the gate between the walls at the royal garden,¹⁰³² slipping through the Chaldeans who had surrounded the city and went into the direction of Arabah.¹⁰³³ ⁵ The Chaldean army pursued the king, overtaking him in the Jericho plain and his army fled in all directions. ⁶ The king was captured and taken to Riblah where the king of Babylon was encamped. A sentence was pronounced¹⁰³⁴ against him. All the sons of King *Zedekiah* were assassinated in his sight, following which his eyes were put out, and he was bound in bronze fetters¹⁰³⁵ and taken to Babylon.

6. *Destruction of the Temple and the City 25:8 – 17*

⁸ In the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar's reign¹⁰³⁶ the captain¹⁰³⁷ of the bodyguard, an official of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. ⁹ He burned the house of the Lord, the royal palace and the houses of Jerusalem: every important (*or, noble's*)¹⁰³⁸ home. ¹⁰ The entire army of the Chaldeans, under the leadership of the captain of the guards destroyed the walls surrounding the city of Jerusalem. ¹¹ Those people who remained in the city along with the defectors who deserted the army of the king of Babylon, together with the rest of the multitude were taken into exile by the captain of the guard of King Nebuchadnezzar. ¹² The captain of the guard did leave some of the poorest of the poor to remain as vinedressers and farmers.

¹³ The bronze pillars that were in the house of the Lord, the stands, the bronze sea, which were all in the house of the Lord were broken into pieces by the Chaldeans and¹⁰³⁹ transported to Babylon. ¹⁴ The pots, shovels, snuffers, incense bowls, and all other vessels used in temple service: ¹⁵ fire-pans,¹⁰⁴⁰ bowls,¹⁰⁴¹ made of silver or gold [*were taken to Babylon*]. ¹⁶ [The two pillars, the one sea, all the stands, which had been made by Solomon for use in the house of the Lord, along with all the vessels used in the house of the Lord that were made of bronze were never calculated as to their weight. ¹⁷ The height of the pillars was eighteen cubits [*twenty-seven feet*], and on top of the pillars there were capitals of bronze, the height of each capital being three cubits [*four and one half feet*]

¹⁰³⁰ Cf.: Jeremiah 52:6.

¹⁰³¹ The word "wall" is omitted in Hebrew.

¹⁰³² There were some ancient Jebusite walls that were still standing and provided a hiding place for the movement of the king and his troops. King David had escaped through this same way at the time of the revolt by his son Absalom.

¹⁰³³ The meaning of this word is uncertain. Since they were going in the direction of Jericho and the Jordan valley it is assumed that they were going to the east or south-east.

¹⁰³⁴ Literally: "they spoke judgment with him."

¹⁰³⁵ AB: "bound him in double fetters [hands and feet]."

¹⁰³⁶ Cf.: Jeremiah 52:24 This has "the eighteenth month." This date seems to be correct. 586 BCE.

¹⁰³⁷ LXX: "the chief cook."

¹⁰³⁸ The Hebrew word is uncertain.

¹⁰³⁹ Literally: "the bronze of them."

¹⁰⁴⁰ These were used to carry hot coals.

¹⁰⁴¹ TAN: "sprinkling bowls."

and the upper part of the capitals and pillars had a decorative [chain] network and pomegranates to adorn each pillar.]¹⁰⁴²

7. Execution of the Leaders 25:18 – 22

18 The captain of the guard took Seraiah the High (*or, chief*) priest and Zephaniah the deputy priest, and three door keepers (*or, warders*). 19 and from the city he took those officers who had positions of command of the armed forces, five men who were royal advisors,¹⁰⁴³ who were found remaining in the city, the secretary of the army commander whose duty was to muster the militia, and six other citizens of the city. 20 They were all taken by Nebuchadnezzar and the captain of the guard, bringing them to Riblah in Babylon. 21 The king of Babylon had them flogged and then had them killed at Riblah in the land of Hamath. It was in this way that Judah was taken from its homeland, into exile.

22 The king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, appointed Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam,¹⁰⁴⁴ the son of Shaphan, to be the governor over the people who still remained in the land.

8. Gedaliah, Governor of Judah 25:23 – 26

23 When all the leadership¹⁰⁴⁵ in the open country¹⁰⁴⁶ along with their followers heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah as governor they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah¹⁰⁴⁷ with their forces.¹⁰⁴⁸ The leaders included Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, Johanan, the son of Kareah and Seraiah, the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah, the son of the Maacathite. 24 Gedaliah reassured¹⁰⁴⁹ these men, saying; “Do not be afraid¹⁰⁵⁰ concerning the Chaldean officials¹⁰⁵¹ who reside in the land. Serve the king of Babylon, and things will be well with you.” 25 However, in the seventh month Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, son of Elishama, who was of royal descent, came with ten men and attacked and killed Gedaliah at Mizpah. [*They also killed*] the Jews and Chaldeans who were with him.¹⁰⁵² 26 Then all the people --- from the least to the greatest --- along with the leadership of the forces fled, going to Egypt, for they were fearful of the Chaldeans.

9. The Hopeful Ending 25:27 – 30

27 In the thirty-seventh year of the exile of *Jehoiachin*,¹⁰⁵³ king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, Evil-merodach (*or, Evil Marduk*), king of Babylon, in the year he began his reign graciously allowed *Jehoiachin*, king of Judah to be released from prison and to dine at the royal table. 28 He spoke kindly with King *Jehoiachin* and gave him preferential treatment over and above that given to

¹⁰⁴² Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation. LXX: “son of the second rank.” TAN: “chief priest and deputy priest.”

¹⁰⁴³ Literally: “men of those seeing the king’s face.”

¹⁰⁴⁴ The historically correct spelling of the name is “Ahaikan.” The spelling in the text is that of the MT.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Literally: “forces.”

¹⁰⁴⁶ “Open country” is omitted in the MT. It is found in Jeremiah 40:7.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Mizpah was a city that had been fortified by King *Asa*.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Literally: “their men.”

¹⁰⁴⁹ Literally: “took and oath to them.”

¹⁰⁵⁰ LXX: “Do not be afraid of the passage of these Chaldean officers.” Jeremiah 40: 9 “to serve the Chaldeans.”

¹⁰⁵¹ LXX: “παρυδον.”

¹⁰⁵² This took place two months after Gedaliah had been appointed as governor.

¹⁰⁵³ King Nebuchadnezzar had died in 561 BCE. His son Amel Marduk, who now ruled, altered the policy of his father dealing with the fortunes of the exiles who were living in Babylon.

all the other kings who were held as prisoners in Babylon. ²⁹ As a result King *Jehoiachin* no longer wore his prison clothing and each day he was able to dine at the royal table. ¹⁰⁵⁴
³⁰ He received a regular allowance granted him by the king, receiving a daily portion each day for the rest of his life. ¹⁰⁵⁵

¹⁰⁵⁴ This was a very high honor. Cf.: II Samuel 19:44; I Kings 2:7. NEB: “he lived as a pensioner of the king for the rest of his life.”

¹⁰⁵⁵ Cf.: ANET p. 308c.

